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THE LITTLE FLOWERS OF SAINT FRANCIS

NEWLY TRANSLATED OUT OF THE ITALIAN BY

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THE LITTLE FLOWERS OF SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Chapter I

In the name of our Lord Jesu Christ the Crucified, and of his Virgin Mother Mary. In this book are found certain little Flowers, Miracles and devout ensamples of the glorious poor little one of Christ, Saint Francis, and of certain his holy Companions, to the praise of Jesu Christ. Amen

AT the first, needs must we consider how the glorious Saint Francis in all the acts of his life was conformed unto Christ the blessed one: how even as Christ in the beginning of His preaching chose out twelve Apostles, to contemn all earthly things, to follow him in poverty and other virtues; so Saint Francis in the beginning chose out for the founding of the Order twelve companions, possessors of the deepest poverty. And even as one of the twelve Apostles of Christ, rejected of God, finally hanged himself by the neck; even so one of the twelve companions of Saint Francis, whose name was John of the Chapel, fell away and finally hanged himself by the neck. And unto the elect this is a great ensample and matter for humility and fear; bearing in mind that no man is certain to persevere unto the end

St Francis of Assisi

The companions of St Francis

in the grace of God. And even as these holy Apostles were altogether wonderful in sanctity and humility and full of the Holy Spirit, so these most holy companions of Saint Francis were men of such sanctity, that, from the time of the Apostles until now, the world never saw men so marvellous and so saintly; in that one of them was caught up into the third heaven, like Saint Paul, and this was Brother Giles; one of them, to wit Brother Philip Lungo, was touched on the lips by an angel with a coal of fire, as was Isaiah the prophet: one of them, and he was Brother Silvester, spake with God, as one friend doth with another, even as Moses did: one through subtlety of intellect flew up even unto the light of the divine Wisdom, like the eagle, to wit John the Evangelist, and this was the most humble Brother Bernard, who set forth clearly the deep things of Holy Writ: one of them was sanctified of God and canonised in heaven, being yet alive in the world, and he was Brother Ruffino, a gentleman of Assisi: and thuswise were they all favoured with singular marks of sanctity, as is set forth hereafter.

Chapter II

Of Brother Bernard of Quintavalle, first companion of St Francis

THE first companion of Saint Francis was Brother Bernard of Assisi, who was converted in this wise: While Saint Francis was

still in the secular habit, albeit he had already despised the world, and went about being wholly held in scorn of men, mortifying his flesh by penances, in so much that by many he was thought foolish and was mocked at as a mad fellow, and was driven away with stones and foul abuse by his kinsfolk and by strangers, yet bore himself patiently amid all manner of ignominy and reproach, as though he were deaf and dumb: Bernard of Assisi, the which was of the noblest, and richest, and wisest in the city, began wisely to take heed unto Saint Francis, how exceeding strong his contempt of the world, how great his patience in the midst of wrongs, so that albeit for a two years' space thus evil intreated of all persons and despised, he ever seemed the more constant; then he began to ponder and to say within himself: "In no wise can it be that this brother hath not abundant grace from God"; so he called him one evening to sup and lodge with him: and Saint Francis consented thereto and supped with him and lodged. And thereat Bernard set it in his heart to watch his sanctity: wherefore he let make ready for him a bed in his own proper chamber, in the which at nighttime ever a lamp did burn. And Saint Francis, for to hide his sanctity, when he was come into the chamber, incontinent did throw himself upon the bed and made as though he slept: and likewise Bernard after some short space set himself to lie down and fell to snoring loudly, in fashion as though he slept right soundly. Whereby Saint Francis, thinking truly that Bernard was

Bernard and St Francis

St Francis' sanctity

asleep, in his sleep rose up from his bed and set himself to pray, lifting up his hands and eyes unto heaven, and with exceeding great devotion and fervour said: "My God, my God." And thus saying and sorely weeping he abode till morning, alway repeating: "My God, my God," and naught beside; and this Saint Francis said, while musing on and marvelling at the excellence of the divine Majesty, which deigned to stoop down to a perishing world and through his poor little Francis purposed to bring a remedy for the salvation of his soul and the souls of others. Therefore illumined by the Holy Spirit, or the spirit of prophecy, foreseeing what great things God would do through him and his Order, and minding him of his own insufficiency and little worth, he cried unto God and besought Him that by His pity and almighty power, without the which the weakness of man may naught avail, He would supply his lack, aid and fulfil what of itself was nothing worth. Bernard seeing, by the light of the lamp, the most devout acts of Saint Francis, and devoutly pondering in his mind the words that he spake, was touched and inspired by the Holy Spirit to change his life; in the morning therefore he called Saint Francis and thus bespake him: "Brother Francis, I am wholly purposed in my heart to leave the world and follow thee in whatsoever thou mayest bid me." Hearing this, Saint Francis rejoiced in spirit, and said: "Bernard, this that thou sayest is a task so great and difficult, that thereof must we seek

counsel of our Lord Jesu Christ, and beseech Him that He be pleased to show us His will therein, and teach us how we may bring it to pass: wherefore let us go together to the bishop's house, wherein is a good priest, and let us let say the Mass; then let us continue in prayer until Tierce, beseeching God that in thrice opening of the missal He may reveal to us the path it is His will we should elect." Bernard made answer that this pleased him right well. So fared they forth and came to the bishop's house: and after they had heard the Mass, and continued praying until Tierce, the priest at the bidding of Saint Francis took the missal, and making the sign of the most holy Cross, opened it thrice in the name of our Lord Jesu Christ: and at the first opening appeared the words that Christ spake in the Gospel to the young man that asked concerning the path of perfection: "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor and follow me"; at the second opening appeared those words that Christ spake unto the Apostles when He sent them forth to preach: "Take nothing for your journey, neither staves, nor scrip, neither bread, neither money"; wishing thereby to teach them that for their daily bread they should set all their hopes on God and fix their mind wholly on the preaching of the holy Gospel; at the third opening of the missal appeared those words that Christ spake: "If any man will come after me, let him

The test of the missal

Silvester and St Francis

deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." Then spake Saint Francis unto Bernard: "Behold the counsel that Christ giveth us: come then and fulfil that which thou hast heard: and blessed be our Lord Jesu Christ, who hath deigned to show forth His own life in the holy Gospel." This heard, Bernard went out and sold all that he had, and he was very rich; and with great joy he gave all his possessions to widows, to orphans, to prisoners, to monasteries and to hospices, and pilgrims; and in all things Saint Francis helped him faithfully and wisely. And a certain man whose name was Silvester seeing that Saint Francis gave and let give so much money to the poor, being moved by greed, said to Saint Francis: "Thou hast not paid me in full for the stones thou didst buy of me for to rebuild the church; therefore pay me now that thou hast money. Therewith Saint Francis, marvelling at his greed and willing not to stir up strife with him, as a true follower of the holy Gospel, put his hands into the bosom of Bernard; and filled his hands with money, which he put into the bosom of Silvester, saying that if he wished for more, more would he give him. Silvester being content with these, forthwith was away and gat him to his house: but in the evening bethinking him of what he had done throughout the day, and chiding himself for his greed, pondering on the fervour of Bernard and the sanctity of Saint Francis, he had from God, on the night following and two other nights, a

vision on this wise, that from the mouth of Saint Francis sprang a cross of gold, of which the top reached unto heaven, and the arms stretched from the East even unto the West. By reason of this vision, he gave away all that he had for the love of God, and became a brother minor, and lived in the Order in such sanctity and grace that he spake with God, as doth one friend with another, whereof Saint Francis oft-times was witness; the which will be set forth hereafter. Bernard in like manner had such grace of God that oftentimes in contemplation was he caught up to God: and Saint Francis said of him, that he was worthy of all reverence, and that it was he that had founded this Order; inasmuch as he was the first to leave the world, keeping back naught for himself, but giving all unto the poor of Christ, and, when he took on him the Gospel poverty, offering himself naked in the arms of the Crucified; bless we His name, world without end. Amen.

Bernard the first follower of St Francis

Chapter III

How for an evil thought that Saint Francis had against Brother Bernard, he bade the said Brother Bernard tread three times with his feet upon his mouth and on his throat

THE most devout servant of the Crucified, Saint Francis, through the rigour of his penances and ceaseless tears, had grown wellnigh blind, and could see but little. On a time

Bernard heeds not St Francis' call

amongst others he hied him from the place where he was, and went to a place where Brother Bernard was, for to speak with him of things divine: and coming to the place, he found that he was at prayer in the wood, all lifted up and joined to God. Therewith went Saint Francis into the wood and called him. "Come," quoth he, "and speak unto this blind man"; and Brother Bernard made him no answer; in that being a man of deep contemplation, his mind was fixed on things above and lifted up to God: but seeing that he had grace exceeding rare to speak of God, whereof Saint Francis had oftentimes been witness, he desired the more to hold parley with him. So biding some short space, he called the second and the third time after the same fashion; but neither time did Brother Bernard hear him, and therefore made him no answer, nor came unto him; so that Saint Francis departed, a little disconsolate and marvelling within himself, and complaining for that Bernard, being called three times, had not come to him. Departing with this thought, Saint Francis, when he was gone a little space, said to his companion: "Wait here for me": and he went aside into a solitary place hard by and cast himself down in prayer, beseeching God that He would make known unto him wherefore Brother Bernard had made him no answer; and as he prayed, there came a voice from God, which said thus: "O poor little man, wherefore art thou troubled? Should a man leave God for a creature? Brother

Bernard, when thou calledst him, was joined unto Me; and could not come to thee thereby nor answer thee; wherefore marvel not that he could not speak to thee; seeing that he was so much lifted out of himself that of thy words he heard not one." Being thus answered of God, Saint Francis straightway with great haste returned unto Brother Bernard, humbly to accuse himself of the thought that he had had concerning him. And beholding him coming towards him, Brother Bernard went to meet him and threw himself at his feet: then Saint Francis let lift him up and told him with great humility the thought and trouble of mind that he had had concerning him, and how God had answered him therein; wherefore he thuswise made an end: "I command thee by holy obedience that thou do whate'er I bid thee." Brother Bernard, fearing that Saint Francis might o'erstep the bounds, as was his wont, in what he bade him do, fain would have escaped this obedience, if so he might be without fault; and therefore thus replied: "Ready am I to work out thy obedience, if thou promise me to do whatsoever I shall bid thee"; and Saint Francis promising, Brother Bernard said: "Now tell me, father, what is thy will that I should do." Then spake Saint Francis: "I command thee by holy obedience, that for punishment of my presumption and the heat within my heart, when now I throw me on the ground upon my back, thou set one foot upon my throat, and the other on my mouth, and thuswise three

St Francis disconsolate

St Francis' penance

times pass over me from side to side, crying shame upon me and contempt, and chief of all bespeak me thus: 'Clodpoll, lie there, thou spawn of Peter Bernardoni, whence cometh such great pride to thee, that art a thing most vile?'" Hearing the which Brother Bernard, albeit right grievous to him was it in the doing, yet for holy obedience, with what courtesy as best he might, he fulfilled the bidding of Saint Francis; and this done, Saint Francis said: "Now do thou command me whate'er thou wilt that I should do; since I have promised thee obedience." Said Brother Bernard: "I command thee by holy obedience that, whensoe'er we be together, thou rebuke and correct me harshly for my faults." Whereat Saint Francis made mighty marvel: for that Brother Bernard was of such great sanctity that he held him in high reverence, and deemed him not blameworthy in any thing at all, and therefore from that time forth Saint Francis took heed to shun his fellowship, by reason of the said obedience, so that no word of correction might ever fall on one whom he knew to be of such great holiness, but when he wished to see him or hear him speak of God, with what speed he might he left him again and was away. Right edifying in very sooth it was to see with what great love and reverence and humbleness Saint Francis, the father, bore him and spake with Brother Bernard, his first-born son. To the laud and glory of Jesu Christ and the poor little one, Saint Francis. Amen.

Chapter IV

How the angel of God proposed a question unto Brother Elias, guardian of a House in the valley of Spoleto, and because Brother Elias answered him proudly, departed and went along the road to Saint James's, where he found Brother Bernard and told him this story

St Francis goes to Galicia

AT the beginning and commencement of the Order, when as yet there were few brothers and the Houses had not been taken into possession, Saint Francis for his devotion went to Saint James's of Galicia, and took with him certain of the brothers, among whom one was Brother Bernard; and as they went thus together on the way, he found in a certain place a poor sick man, and having compassion upon him, said to Brother Bernard: "Little brother, I will that thou stay here to tend on this sick man"; and Brother Bernard humbly bowing the knee and bending the head received the obedience of the holy father, and stayed in that place; and Saint Francis with the other companions went on to Saint James's. Having won thither, while he was spending the night in prayer in the church of St James, it was revealed by God unto Saint Francis, that it behoved him to take possession of many places throughout the world, because his Order must needs grow and increase into a vast multitude of brothers: so upon this revelation, Saint Francis began to take possession of places in all those countries. And when Saint Francis was returning by the same

The angel at the door

way, he found Brother Bernard and the sick man, with whom he had left him, fully restored to health; wherefore Saint Francis the next year gave leave unto Brother Bernard to go to Saint James's. So Saint Francis returned to the valley of Spoleto and abode in a solitary place, he and Brother Masseo and Brother Elias and others; and they all took right good heed not to let or hinder Saint Francis from prayer; and this did they for the great reverence that they bore him, and because they knew that God revealed unto him wondrous high matters in his prayers. Now it befell on a day that, Saint Francis being in prayer in a wood, a fair youth, arrayed for a journey, came to the door of the House, and knocked with such haste and violence and for so long a space that the brothers greatly marvelled at such unwonted knocking. Went Brother Masseo, and oped the door, and said to the youth: "Whence art thou come, my little son, for in very sooth it seems that thou wast never here before, in such unwonted fashion hast thou knocked?" The youth replied: "And how then should one knock?" Quoth Brother Masseo: "Give three knocks, one a brief space after the other; then wait so long that the brother may have said the Paternoster and come unto thee; and if in this space he does not come, knock once again." The youth replied: "I am in great haste and therefore I knock so loudly because I have a long journey to make, and am come here to speak with Brother Francis; but he is now

wrapt in contemplation in the wood, wherefore I wish not to disturb him; but go, tell Brother Elias that I would fain ask him a question, for I hear that he is very wise." Then went Brother Masseo and told Brother Elias that he should go to the youth: but he waxed wroth thereat and would not go. Wherefore Brother Masseo knew not what to do nor what to answer him; in that if he said, Brother Elias cannot come, it were a lie; and should he tell how he was wroth and would not come, he feared to set before him an evil example. When Brother Masseo was so long delaying to return, the young man knocked again as at the first, and a short while after Brother Masseo returned to the door and said unto the youth: "Thou hast taken no heed unto my instruction in the matter of knocking." Replied the youth: "Brother Elias will not come unto me: but go thou and tell Brother Francis that I am come to speak with him; but since I would fain not hinder him from prayer, tell him to send unto me Brother Elias." Then Brother Masseo got him to Saint Francis, who was praying in the wood with his face uplifted towards heaven, and set forth to him the message of the youth and the answer of Brother Elias: now that youth was an angel of God in the form of a man. Therewith Saint Francis, nor moving from his place nor bending down his head, spake to Brother Masseo: "Go thou and tell Brother Elias for obedience sake to go forthwith unto this youth." Brother Elias receiving the obedience of Saint Francis, went to the door

Brother Elias very wroth

and will not answer the angel

much disquieted, and opened it with great noise and violence, and said to the youth: "What is thy will?" Replied the youth: "Take heed, brother, that thou be not disquieted, as thou dost seem to be; for anger weigheth down the soul and suffereth it not to see the truth." Said Brother Elias: "Tell me what thing thou wilt of me." Replied the youth: "I ask thee if it be lawful for the followers of the Holy Gospel to eat that which is set before them even as Christ bade his disciples; and I ask thee moreover if it be lawful for any man to put forward aught contrary to the liberty of the Gospel." Brother Elias made answer haughtily: "I know full well, but will not answer thee, so go thy ways." Quoth the youth: "I should know better to answer this question than canst thou." Then in a fury and great rage Brother Elias shut to the door and was away. Anon began he to muse upon the question aforesaid and doubt within himself, and knew not how to resolve it; for he was vicar of the Order and had commanded and made an ordinance out and beyond the Gospel and beyond the Rule of Saint Francis, to wit, that no brother in the Order should eat flesh; so that the said question was expressly aimed at him. Wherefore, not knowing how to clear himself, and thinking on the modesty of the youth, and how he had said that he should know better how to answer that question than could he, Brother Elias went back again to the door and opened it for to ask the youth touching the question aforesaid; but he

was already away, in that the pride of Brother Elias was not worthy to hold converse with the angel. This done, Saint Francis, to whom the whole had been revealed by God, came back from out the wood, and sharply with loud voice rebuked Brother Elias saying: "You do ill, proud Brother Elias, to drive away the holy angels that come to teach us. I tell thee that much I fear lest thy pride will make thee end thy days outside the Order." On that same day, in the very hour that the angel went away, appeared he in the self-same form to Brother Bernard, who was on his way back from Saint James's, and had won the bank of a great river; and saluted him in his own tongue, saying: "God give thee peace, good brother"; and good Brother Bernard marvelled exceedingly, and noting the beauty of the youth and the language of his native land, together with his salutation of peace and his joyful countenance, he asked: "Whence art thou come, good youth?" Replied the angel: "I come from the place where Saint Francis dwells, and went there to have speech with him; and this I could not attain, for that he was in the wood contemplating things divine, and I wished not to disturb him. And in that place dwell Brother Masseo and Brother Giles and Brother Elias; and Brother Masseo taught me to knock at the door as the brothers use; but Brother Elias, because he would not answer the question that I set him, afterwards repented thereof, and would fain have heard me and seen me, but he

The angel appears to Bernard

and sets him across the river

could not." After these words, said the angel to Brother Bernard: "Wherefore dost thou not cross over?" Brother Bernard made answer: "Because I fear the danger for the depth of the waters that I see." Quoth the angel: "Let us cross over together, and be not doubting"; and he took his hand and in the twinkling of an eye set him on the other side of the stream. Then Brother Bernard knew that he was the angel of God, and with great reverence and joy cried in a loud voice: "O blessed angel of God, tell me thy name." Replied the angel: "Wherefore askest thou my name, the which is Wonderful?" And this said, the angel vanished out of sight and left Brother Bernard much comforted, in such sort that all that way he journeyed with great joy; and bethought him of the day and hour that the angel had appeared to him. And coming to the place where Saint Francis was with the companions aforesaid, he set forth unto them the whole matter in order; and they knew of a surety that the selfsame angel on that day and on that hour had appeared unto them and unto him.

Chapter V

How the holy Brother Bernard of Assisi was sent by Saint Francis to Bologna and there founded a House

SEEING that Saint Francis and his companions were called of God and elect to bear in their hearts and in their deeds and preach

with their tongues the cross of Christ, they seemed to be and were in very sooth men crucified, so by reason of their habit as of their austere life and deeds and works: and therefore they desired the more to suffer shame and contumely for the love of Christ, rather than honour of the world and reverence and praise of men: in insults they rejoiced and at honours they grew sad: and so they passed through the world as strangers and pilgrims, bearing with them naught save Jesu Christ Crucified. And sith they were true branches of the true vine, that is Christ, they brought forth great and good fruit of souls, that they won for God. It happened in the beginning of the Order that Saint Francis sent Brother Bernard to Bologna to the end that he might there, according to the grace that God had given him, bring forth fruit to God; and Brother Bernard making the sign of the most holy cross, for holy obedience departed and came unto Bologna. And the children seeing him in poor and threadbare habit, despitefully intreated and made much mock of him, as though he were a fool: but Brother Bernard with patience and with joy bore all things for the love of Christ; nay, of set purpose that he might the more be evilly intreated, betook him to the market-place of the city: whereby, he sitting there, many children and men came together about him, and some from behind, and others before, plucked at his hood; some pelted him with dust and some with stones; some pushed him this way and others that: and

Bernard sent to Bologna

He suffers great insults

Brother Bernard continuing always after the same fashion and with the same patience, with a joyful countenance, neither complained nor changed at all, and for the space of many days returned to the same place, but for to suffer the like usage. And sith patience is a work of perfection and proof of virtue, a learned doctor of the law, beholding and musing on the great constancy and virtue of Brother Bernard, how for so many days nor taunt nor contumely could e'er disquiet him, said thus within himself:

"Of a surety this needs must be a holy man"; and coming near unto him, he asked: "Who art thou? and wherefore art thou come hither?" And Brother Bernard for reply put his hand into his bosom and drew forth the Rule of Saint Francis, and gave it him that he might read, and when he had read it, musing on its most lofty state of perfection, with exceeding great marvel and amazement he turned him unto his companions and said: "Of a truth this is the highest state of religion whereof I have ever heard: wherefore this man and his companions are the holiest men in this world, and whoso does him wrong committeth a most grievous sin; most highly should we honour him, seeing that he is a true friend of God." And he said to Brother Bernard: "If 'tis your wish to found a House, wherein you may serve God conveniently, with right good will, for the salvation of my soul, will I give it you." Replied Brother Bernard: "Good sir, methinks our Lord Jesu Christ hath

put this thought within your heart; and therefore for the honour of Christ I willingly accept your proffered gift." Then with great joy and love the said judge took Brother Bernard to his house; and gave him anon the promised House and made it all ready and at his own charges furnished it: and from that time forth became the father and special defender of Brother Bernard and his companions. And Brother Bernard, through his holy life, began to be much honoured of the people, in such sort that whoso might touch and see him, deemed himself blessed thereby; but he like a true disciple of Christ and the humble Francis, fearing that the honour of the world might hinder the peace and salvation of his soul, on a day departed and returned unto Saint Francis and spake thus unto him: "Father, the House is founded in the city of Bologna: send brothers thither to maintain it and abide therein: since I have no more profit therein, nay, rather for the too great honour done to me I fear me I have lost e'en more than I have gained." Thereat Saint Francis, learning all things in order, how God had worked through Brother Bernard, gave thanks to God, who thuswise was beginning to enlarge the poor little disciples of the Cross: and anon he sent of his companions to Bologna and the parts of Lombardy, the which founded many Houses in diverse places.

but founds a House

Chapter VI

How Saint Francis blessed the holy Brother Bernard and left him as his vicar, when he came to pass away from this life

St Francis prays for Bernard

BROTHER BERNARD was of such sanctity that Saint Francis held him in high reverence, and praised him oftentimes. It happened on a day while Saint Francis was continuing devoutly in prayer, that it was revealed to him by God that Brother Bernard under leave of God must needs endure full many and sharp assaults of the demons: wherefore Saint Francis having great compassion on the said Brother Bernard, whom he loved as his own dear son, prayed many days with tears, beseeching God for him and committing him unto Jesu Christ, that he might give him the victory over the demon. And Saint Francis thus devoutly praying, on a day God answered him: "Francis, fear not; for all the temptations wherewith Brother Bernard must needs be assailed, are permitted him of God, for the exercise of virtue and a crown of merit; and in the end will he have the victory over all his enemies, for that he is one of the great ones of the kingdom of heaven." At the which reply Saint Francis was exceeding glad and gave thanks unto God: and from that hour forth he ever bore him greater love and reverence. And this was shown forth not only in his life, but also at his death. For Saint Francis coming

near unto death and having, like the holy patriarch Jacob, his devoted sons standing round about him sorrowing and weeping at the the departure of so lovable a father, asked: "Where is my first-born? Come to me, my little son, that my soul may bless thee before I die." Then Brother Bernard spake secretly unto Brother Elias, who was vicar of the Order: "Go, father, to the right hand of the saint, that he may bless thee." And Brother Elias setting himself at his right hand, Saint Francis, who had lost his sight by reason of his too much weeping, laid his right hand on the head of Brother Elias, and said: "This is not the head of my first-born Brother Bernard." Then Brother Bernard went to him on his left hand, and Saint Francis then put his arms in the shape of a cross and laid the right hand on the head of Brother Bernard and the left on the head of the said Brother Elias, and spake thus unto Brother Bernard: "May God the Father of our Lord Jesu Christ bless thee with all spiritual and celestial blessings in Christ. Since thou art the first-born, elect in this holy Order to give an ensample of the gospel life, to follow Christ in gospel poverty; for not only didst thou give and distribute to the poor whate'er was thine wholly and freely for the love of Christ, but offered thyself also unto God in this Order for a sacrifice of sweetness; blessed be thou therefore of our Lord Jesu Christ and of me his poor little servant, with everlasting benediction, going and staying, wak-

In dying blesses him

and elects him his vicar

ing and sleeping, living and dying; let whoso blesseth thee be filled with blessings, whoso curseth thee go not free from punishment. Be thou the chief among thy brethren, and to thy command let all the brothers yield obedience: have thou license to receive into this Order whomsoe'er thou wilt, and let no brother have lordship over thee, and be thou free to go and stay where'er it pleaseth thee." And after the death of Saint Francis, the brothers loved and honoured Brother Bernard as a father worthy of all reverence, and when he drew nigh unto death there came to him many brothers from diverse parts of the world, among whom came that seraphic and godlike Brother Giles; who, looking on Brother Bernard, said with joyfulness: "Sursum corda, Brother Bernard, sursum corda": and Brother Bernard spake secretly unto a brother that he should make ready for Brother Giles a place well fitted for contemplation: and so was it done. Being at the last hour of death, Brother Bernard let lift him up, and spake unto the brothers that were before him, saying: "O brothers most dear, I desire not to speak to you many words: but ye should bear in mind that the life of Religion that I have had, ye have still now, and this that now I have, ye too shall have, and this I find within my soul, that for a thousand worlds the like of this I would not have served any other Lord than our Lord Jesu Christ: and for every fault I have committed I do accuse myself and confess my guilt unto my Saviour Jesu and to you. I pray

you, my brothers most dear, that ye love one another"; and after these words and other good admonishments, he laid him down upon his bed, and his face grew bright and joyful beyond measure, so that all the brothers marvelled exceedingly, and in that joyfulness his most holy soul, crowned with glory, passed from this present life into the blessed life of the angels. Bernard passes away

Chapter VII

How Saint Francis passed a Lent in an island in the lake of Perugia, where he fasted forty days and forty nights, and ate no more than one half loaf

AS the true servant of Christ, Saint Francis, was in certain points as it were another Christ, given to the world for the salvation of men, it was the will of God the Father to make him in many of his acts conformed and like unto His own dear son Jesu Christ; even as was shown forth in the venerable company of the twelve companions, and in the wondrous mystery of the holy stigmata, and in the unbroken fast during the sacred Lent, which he kept in this manner. It befell on a time that Saint Francis, on the day of carnival, being hard by the lake of Perugia in the house of one of his devoted followers, with the which he had lodged the night, was inspired of God that he should go and keep that Lent on an island in the lake; wherefore Saint Francis besought this devoted follower of his, that, for the love of Christ, he

St Francis goes to an island

would carry him across in his little-boat to an island on the lake, wherein no man dwelt, and that so would he do upon the night of Ash Wednesday, so that none might be ware of it; so he for love of the great devotion that he had unto Saint Francis with diligence fulfilled his request and carried him across to the island aforesaid, and Saint Francis took with him naught save two small loaves. And being come unto the island, and his friend parting himself to go back home, Saint Francis besought him tenderly that to no man would he reveal in what guise he there abode, and that save upon Holy Thursday he would not come to him; and so he was away. And Saint Francis remained alone: and sith there was no dwelling-place whereto he might betake him, he entered into a close thicket which many a thorny bush and shrub had fashioned like a cave or little hut: and in this place he gave himself up to prayer and contemplation of the things of heaven. And there abode he all the Lent, nor eating nor drinking aught save half of one of those small loaves, even as was found by his devoted follower on Holy Thursday, what time that he came back to him; who found of the two loaves one still entire, but of the other, half. So men believe that Saint Francis took no food from reverence for the fast of Christ the blessed one, who fasted forty days and forty nights without partaking any earthly food; but in this manner with that half a loaf chased far the venom of vain glory from him, and after

the pattern of Christ kept fast for forty days and forty nights; and thereafter in that place where Saint Francis had wrought such wondrous abstinence, through his merits did God work many miracles; for the which cause did men begin to build houses there and dwell therein; and in brief space uprose a hamlet fair and great and therewithal a House for the brothers, the which is named the House of the Island; and even to this day the men and women of that hamlet have great reverence and devotion for the place where Saint Francis kept the aforesaid Lent.

He fasts forty days and forty nights

Chapter VIII

How, as Saint Francis and Brother Leo were going by the way, he set forth unto him what things were perfect joy

WHENAS Saint Francis was going one day from Perugia to Saint Mary of the Angels with Brother Leo in the spring tide, and the very bitter cold grievously tormented him, he called to Brother Leo that was going on before and said thus: "Brother Leo, though the Brothers Minor throughout all the world were great ensamples of sanctity and true edifying, nathless write it down and take heed diligently that not therein is perfect joy." And going on a little further, Saint Francis called a second time: "O Brother Leo, albeit the Brothers Minor should give sight to the blind, make straight the crooked, cast out devils, make the deaf to hear, the lame to walk,

What things are not perfect joy

the dumb to speak, and (greater still) should raise them that have been dead a four days' space, write that not herein is perfect joy." And going on a little, he cried aloud: "O Brother Leo, if the Brother Minor should know all tongues and all sciences and all the Scriptures, so that he could prophesy and reveal not only things to come but also the secrets of consciences and souls, write that not therein is perfect joy." Going on yet a little further, Saint Francis called aloud once more: "O Brother Leo, thou little sheep of God, albeit the Brother Minor should speak with the tongue of angels, and know the courses of the stars and the virtues of herbs; and though all the treasures of the earth were revealed unto him and he understood the virtues of birds, and of fishes, and of all animals, and of men, and of trees, and of stones, and of roots, and of waters, write that not therein is perfect joy." And going on a little further, Saint Francis cried aloud: "O Brother Leo, albeit the Brother Minor could preach so well as to turn all the infidels to the faith of Christ, write that not therein is perfect joy." And this manner of speech continuing for full two miles, Brother Leo with much marvel besought him, saying: "Father, I pray thee in the name of God that thou tell me, wherein is perfect joy." And Saint Francis thus made answer: "When we come to Saint Mary of the Angels, all soaked as we are with rain and numbed with cold and besmirched with mud and tormented with

hunger, and knock at the door; and the porter comes in anger and says: 'Who are ye?' and we say: 'We be two of your brethren'; and he says, 'Ye be no true men; nay, ye be two rogues that gad about deceiving the world and robbing the alms of the poor; get ye gone': and thereat he shuts to the door and makes us stand without in the snow and the rain, cold and a-hungered, till night-fall; if therewithal we patiently endure such wrong and such cruelty and such rebuffs without being disquieted and without murmuring against him; and with humbleness and charity bethink us that this porter knows us full well and that God makes him to speak against us; O Brother Leo, write that herein is perfect joy. And if we be instant in knocking and he come out full of wrath and drive us away as importunate knaves, with insults and buffetings, saying: 'Get ye gone hence, vilest of thieves, begone to the alms-house, for here ye shall find nor food nor lodging'; if we suffer this with patience and with gladness and with love, O Brother Leo, write that herein is perfect joy. And if we still constrained by hunger, cold and night, knock yet again and shout and with much weeping pray him for the love of God that he will but open and let us in; and he yet more enraged should say: 'These be importunate knaves, I will pay them well as they deserve,' and should rush out with a knotty stick and taking us by the hood, throw us upon the ground and send us rolling in the snow and beat us with all the knots of that stick: if

What things are perfect joy

St Francis and Brother Leo

with patience and with gladness we suffer all these things, thinking on the pains of the blessed Christ, the which we ought to suffer for the love of Him: O Brother Leo, write that here and herein is perfect joy: then hear the conclusion of the whole matter, Brother Leo: Above all graces and gifts of the Holy Spirit, that Christ granteth to His beloved, is to overcome oneself, and willingly for the love of Christ endure pains and insults and shame and want: inasmuch as in all other gifts of God we may not glory, sith they are not ours but God's; whence saith the Apostle: What hast thou that thou hast not received of God? And if thou hast received it of Him, wherefore boastest thou thyself as if thou hadst it of thyself? But in the cross of tribulation and affliction we may boast, sith this is ours; and therefore saith the Apostle, I would not that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesu Christ.

Chapter IX

How Saint Francis taught Brother Leo how to answer him; and how he could never say aught save the contrary of what Saint Francis wished

IT befell on a time in the beginning of the Order that Saint Francis was with Brother Leo in a place where they had not books to say the divine office withal; when the hour of matins came, said Saint Francis to Brother Leo: "Dear

son, we have no breviary wherewith to say matins; but to the end that we may spend the time in praising God, I will speak and thou shalt answer as I shall teach thee: and take good heed that thou change not the words to other than I shall teach thee. I shall say thus: O Brother Francis, so many sins and evils hast thou done in the world that thou art deserving of hell; and thou, Brother Leo, shalt answer: Sooth is it thou meritest the lowest depth of hell." And Brother Leo with dove-like simplicity replied: "Right willingly, father; begin, in the name of God." Then began Saint Francis to say: "So many sins and evils hast thou done in the world that thou art deserving of hell." And Brother Leo made answer: "God will work through thee so much of good that thou wilt go to paradise." Quoth Saint Francis: "Nay, say not so, Brother Leo; but when I shall say: Brother Francis, so many iniquities hast thou done against God that thou art worthy to be accursed of God, do thou answer thus: In very sooth art thou worthy to be set among the accursed ones." And Brother Leo replied: "Right willingly, father." Therewith Saint Francis with many tears and sighs and beating of the breast cried with a loud voice: "O my Lord of heaven and earth, I have done against thee so many iniquities and so many sins that I am altogether worthy to be accursed of Thee"; and Brother Leo made answer: "O Brother Francis, God will do so unto thee that among

Leo's contrary answers

St Francis reproves him

the blessed shalt thou above all be blessed." And Brother Francis marvelling that Brother Leo answered to the contrary of what he had laid upon him, reproved him saying: "Wherefore dost thou not answer even as I teach? I command thee by holy obedience that thou answer as I shall teach thee. I shall say thus: "O Brother Francis, vile wretch, thinkest thou that God will have mercy on thee, seeing thou hast committed so many sins against the Father of mercy and God of all consolation, that thou art not worthy to find mercy? And thou Brother Leo, little lamb, wilt answer: In no wise art thou worthy to find mercy." But whenas Saint Francis said: "O Brother Francis, vile wretch" and the like, Brother Leo made answer: "God the Father, whose mercy is infinitely greater than thy sin, will show thee great mercy, and, more than this, will pour upon thee many graces." At this reply Saint Francis being sweetly angered and patiently disquieted, said unto Brother Leo: "And wherefore hast thou had the boldness to do against obedience, and now so many times hast answered to the contrary of that which I laid upon thee?" Replied Brother Leo right humbly and reverently: "God knows, my father, that each time I set it in my heart to answer as thou hadst bid me; but God makes me speak as it pleaseth Him and not as it pleaseth me." Whereat Saint Francis marvelled, and said to Brother Leo: "I pray thee most lovingly that this time thou answer me as I have told thee."

Replied Brother Leo: "Speak in the name of God, for of a surety will I this time answer as thou wishest." And Saint Francis weeping said: "O Brother Francis, vile wretch, thinkest thou that God will have mercy upon thee?" Replied Brother Leo: "Nay rather, great grace shalt thou receive of God and He shall exalt thee and glorify thee for ever, for every one that humbleth himself shall be exalted, and naught other can I say since God speaketh through my mouth." And thuswise in this humble strife, with many tears and much spiritual consolation, they kept watch until the day. St Francis' humility

Chapter X

How Brother Masseo, as though mocking, said unto Saint Francis that all the world came after him: and he replied that this was for the confusion of the world and the grace of God

WHENAS Saint Francis on a time abode in the House of Portiuncula with Brother Masseo of Marignano, a man of much sanctity, discretion and grace in speaking of God, for the which cause Saint Francis loved him much: one day Saint Francis returning from the wood and from his prayers, and being at the entrance to the wood, the said Brother Masseo desired to make proof of his humility, and stood over against him, and as though mocking said: "Why after thee? why after thee? why after thee?" Replied Saint Francis: "What is

St Francis and Masseo

this thou wouldest say?" Quoth Brother Masseo: "I say, why doth all the world come after thee, and why is it seen that all men long to see thee, and hear thee, and obey thee? Thou art not a man comely of form, thou art not of much wisdom, thou art not noble of birth: whence comes it then that it is after thee that the whole world doth run?" Hearing this Saint Francis, all overjoyed in spirit, lifting up his face unto heaven, stood for a great while with his mind uplifted in God; anon returning to himself again, he knelt him down and rendered thanks and praises unto God: and then with great fervour of spirit turned him to Brother Masseo and said: "Wilt thou know why after me? wilt thou know why after me? wilt thou know why after me? that the whole world doth run? This cometh unto me from the eyes of the most high God, which behold at all time the evil and the good: for those most holy eyes have seen among sinners none more vile, none more lacking, no greater sinner than am I: wherefore to do this marvellous work the which He purposeth to do, He hath not found upon the earth a creature more vile, and therefore hath He chosen me to confound the nobleness and the greatness and the strength and the beauty and wisdom of the world: to the intent that men may know that all virtue and all goodness come from Him, and not from the creature, and that no man may glory in himself; but whoso will glory, may glory in the Lord, unto whom is honour and glory for ever

and ever." Then Brother Masseo, at so humble a reply uttered with so great fervour, was afraid, and knew of a surety that Saint Francis was rooted and grounded in humility.

They come to three roads

Chapter XI

How Saint Francis made Brother Masseo turn round and round several times, and then went to Sienna

IT befell on a day when Saint Francis was going by the way with Brother Masseo, that the said Brother Masseo was going on a little before; and coming to a place where three roads met whereby one might go to Florence, to Sienna, or to Arezzo, quoth Brother Masseo: "Father, by which way are we to go?" Replied Saint Francis: "By that which God shall will." Quoth Brother Masseo: "And how can we know the will of God?" Replied Saint Francis: "By the sign which I shall show thee; wherefore by the merit of holy obedience I command thee that in the cross-way where thou art standing now, thou turn round and round as little children do, and cease not turning unless I tell thee." Then Brother Masseo began to turn him round and round, and turned round so long that oftentimes he fell upon the ground through giddiness of the head, the which is wont to be engendered through such manner of turning; but sith Saint Francis did not bid him stop, he forthwith got up again, desiring faithfully to yield obedience. At length, while he was

The choice of ways

turning round right manfully, Saint Francis said: "Stand firm and do not move"; and so he stood, and Saint Francis asked him: "Towards what quarter is thy face now turned?" Replied Brother Masseo: "Towards Sienna." Quoth Saint Francis: "That is the way that God would have us go." Now as they went along this way, Brother Masseo marvelled within himself, wherefore Saint Francis had made him do as do the children, before the worldly folk that passed that way: howbeit for reverence sake he dared say naught to the holy father. As they drew nigh unto Sienna, the people of the city heard of the coming of the saint and hied them out to meet him; and of their devotion bore him and his companion right to the bishop's house, in such wise that they touched not the ground at all with their feet. Now at that same hour certain folk of Sienna were at strife with one another, and already two of them lay dead. Saint Francis having won there preached to them in so devout and saintly a fashion, that he brought them one and all to peace and close unity and concord together. For the which cause the bishop of Sienna, hearing of the holy work that Saint Francis had wrought, bade him to his house and received him with high honour that day, and eke the night. And the next morn Saint Francis, who with true humility sought naught in all his works save only the glory of God, rose up betimes with his companion, and without the bishop's knowledge was away. Whereat the said Brother Masseo went

by the way murmuring within himself, saying: "What is this that this good man hath done? Me he made to turn round and round like a little child, and to the bishop who hath done him such honour, he hath said not even a word, nor given him thanks withal"; and to Brother Masseo it seemed that Saint Francis had borne himself therein without discretion. But anon by divine inspiration coming to himself again, and chiding himself within his heart, Brother Masseo said: "Thou art too proud, who dost judge the works of God, and art worthy of hell for thy undiscerning pride; for yesterday did Brother Francis work such mighty works that, if the Angel of God had wrought them, they had not been more marvellous: wherefore, if he had bidden thee throw stones, thou shouldst have done it and obeyed: for what he did upon the way proceeded forth of God's own working, as was set forth by the good ending that followed thereon; for had he not made peace between those that were at strife with each other, not only many bodies would have been stabbed to death, as had indeed begun to be, but many souls also the devil would have dragged to hell: wherefore most foolish art thou and proud that murmurest at that which manifestly cometh forth from out the will of God." And all these things that Brother Masseo spake within his heart, going on in front, were revealed of God unto Saint Francis. Wherefore Saint Francis, coming close up to him, spake thus: "Hold fast the things that now are in thy thoughts, for they

Brother Masseo's doubts

Masseo humiliated

are good and useful and inspired of God; but thy first murmuring was blind and vain and proud, and by the devil set within thy mind." Thereby did Brother Masseo clearly see that Saint Francis knew the secrets of his heart, and for a surety understand that the spirit of divine wisdom did guide the holy father in all his acts.

Chapter XII

How Saint Francis laid on Brother Masseo the office of the door, of alms-giving, and of the kitchen: then at the prayers of the brothers set him free of them

SAINT FRANCIS, desiring to humble Brother Masseo, to the end that he might not be lifted up to vain glory by the many gifts and graces that God gave him, but by virtue of humility might grow therewith from virtue unto virtue, on a time when he abode in a solitary place with those true saints, his first companions, (among the which was the said Brother Masseo), spake on a day to Brother Masseo, before all his companions: "O Brother Masseo, all these thy companions have the grace of contemplation and of prayer; but thou hast the grace of preaching the word of God, for the satisfying of the people: wherefore to the end that these may be able to give themselves up to contemplation, I will that thou perform the office of the door and of alms-giving and of the kitchen; and when the other brothers eat, thou shalt eat without the door of the House; so that whosoever shall come to the

house, thou mayst satisfy them, ere they knock, with some good words of God; so that then none other need go out save thee; and this do for the merit of holy obedience." Therewith Brother Masseo drew back his hood and bent his head, and humbly received that obedience, and continued therein for many days performing the office of the door and of alms-giving and of the kitchen. Whereat his companions, as men enlightened of God, began to feel in their hearts great remorse, considering that Brother Masseo was a man of great perfection, even as they and more so, and that on him was laid all the burden of the House and not on them. For the which cause they all were moved with one desire, and gat them to the holy father and besought him that it would please him to distribute among them those offices, sith their consciences could in no wise endure that Brother Masseo should bear the burden of such toil. Hearing this, Saint Francis yielded him unto their counsels, and granted their desire; and calling Brother Masseo, said unto him: "Brother Masseo, thy companions desire to have share in the offices that I have given thee, and therefore I will that the said offices be divided." Quoth Brother Masseo with great humility and patience: "Father, whate'er thou dost lay on me, or wholly, or in part, I deem it altogether done of God." Then Saint Francis, beholding their loving kindness and the humility of Brother Masseo, preached unto them a marvellous sermon on holy humility; setting forth unto them that the greater the gifts and graces that

The sermon on humility

St Francis and Masseo go towards France

God giveth us, the more humble should we be, sith without humility no virtue is acceptable to God. And done the preaching, he distributed the offices with love exceeding great.

Chapter XIII

How Saint Francis and Brother Masseo set the bread that they had begged upon a stone hard by a fountain, and how Saint Francis praisea poverty exceedingly. Then besought God and Saint Peter and Saint Paul that He would set in his heart the love of holy poverty, and how Saint Peter and Saint Paul appeared unto him

THE wonderful servant and follower of Christ, to wit Saint Francis, to the end that he might in all things conform himself perfectly unto Christ, who, as the Gospel saith, sent his disciples forth by two and two unto all the cities and places where He was himself purposing to go; seeing that after the pattern of Christ he had gathered together twelve companions, sent them forth by two and two to preach throughout the world. And to give them an ensample of true obedience, he was himself the first to go, after the pattern of Christ who began to do before he taught. Wherefore having allotted to his companions the other parts of the world, he with Brother Masseo as his companion took the road that led to the land of France. And coming one day to a town sore hungered, they went, according to the rule, begging their bread for the love of God; and Saint Francis went by one

street, and Brother Masseo by another. But because Saint Francis was mean to look upon and small of stature, and was deemed thereby a vile beggar by whoso knew him not, he got by his begging naught save a few mouthfuls and scraps of dry bread: but to Brother Masseo, in that he was tall and fair of form, were given good pieces, large and in plenty, and of fresh bread. When that they had done their begging, they met together to eat in a place without the city, where was a fair fountain and, hard by, a fine, broad stone; upon the which each set the alms that he had begged. And Saint Francis, seeing that Brother Masseo's pieces of bread were more and finer and larger than his own, rejoiced with great joy, and said: "O Brother Masseo, we are not worthy of such vast treasure": and when he repeated many times these self-same words, Brother Masseo made answer: "Father, how can one speak of treasure where is such poverty and lack of all things whereof there is need? Here is nor cloth, nor knife, nor plate, nor porringer, nor house, nor table, nor man-servant, nor maid-servant." Quoth Saint Francis: "And this it is that I account vast treasure, wherein is no thing at all prepared by human hands, but whatsoe'er we have is given by God's own providence, as manifestly doth appear in the bread that we have begged, in the table of stone so fine, and in the fount so clear; wherefore I will that we pray unto God that He make us to love with all our heart the treasure of holy poverty which is so

The treasure of poverty

The fervour of St Francis

noble, that thereunto did God Himself become a servitor." And when he had said these words, and they had done their prayer, and for refreshment of the body had taken of those pieces and drunk of that water, they rose up to journey into France, and drawing nigh unto a church Saint Francis said to his companion: "Let us go into the church to pray." And Saint Francis gat him behind the altar and gave himself to prayer: and in that same prayer he received from the divine visitation fervour so exceeding great, the which inflamed his soul so mightily with the love of holy poverty that, by the colour of his face and the unwonted opening of his lips, it seemed as though he breathed forth flames of love. And coming thus enkindled to his companion, he bespake him thus: "Ah! ah! ah! Brother Masseo, give thyself to me"; and thus spake he three times; and at the third time Saint Francis with his breath lifted Brother Masseo up into the air, and threw him a great spear's length in front of him; whereby exceeding great amazement took hold on Brother Masseo. Afterwards he recounted to his companions how that, when as he was uplifted and hurled along by the breath that Saint Francis breathed on him, he tasted such sweetness in his soul, and consolation of the Holy Spirit, that in all his life he ne'er had felt the like. And this done, Saint Francis said: "My comrade, let us go to Saint Peter and Saint Paul and pray them to teach us and help us to possess the immeasurable treasure of most holy poverty; for it is a treasure so high

excelling and so divine that we be not worthy to lay it up in our vile vessels; since this is that celestial virtue whereby all earthly things and fleeting are trodden under foot, and whereby all hindrances are lifted from the soul, so that freely she may join herself to God eternal. And this is the virtue that makes the soul, still tied to earth, hold converse with the angels in heaven, and this it is that hung with Christ upon the cross, with Christ was buried, with Christ rose up again, with Christ ascended into heaven; the which also in this life grants to the souls that love it an easier flight to heaven; in that it guards the arms of true humility and love. Wherefore let us pray the most holy apostles of Christ, the which were perfect lovers of this gospel pearl, that they may beg for us this grace from our Lord Jesu Christ, that of His most holy mercy He may make us worthy to become true lovers, followers, and humble disciples, of the most precious, most lovable, and gospel poverty." With such converse they so fared until they came unto Rome, and went into the church of Saint Peter; and Saint Francis set himself to pray in one corner of the church, and Brother Masseo in another; and as he continued a long time in prayer with much weeping and devotion, there appeared unto Saint Francis the most holy apostles Peter and Paul in great splendour, and said: "Because thou hast asked and desired to observe that which Christ and His holy apostles observed, the Lord Jesu Christ hath sent us unto thee to announce that thy prayer is heard,

St Francis and Masseo come to Rome

St Peter and St Paul appear to St Francis

and that God has granted to thee and to thy followers in uttermost perfection the treasure of most holy poverty. And further we tell thee in His name that whoso after thy pattern shall perfectly follow this desire, he is assured of the blessedness of life eternal: and blessed shalt thou and all thy followers be"; and with these words they were away, leaving Saint Francis filled with consolation. And rising from prayer, he returned to his companion and asked him if God had revealed naught unto him; and he answered, "Naught." Then Saint Francis told him how the holy apostles had appeared to him, and what they had revealed. Whereat they both being filled with joy resolved to return unto the valley of Spoleto, and leave their journeying into France.

Chapter XIV

How, as Saint Francis and his brothers were discoursing of God, He appeared in the midst of them

SAINT FRANCIS and his companions, in the beginning of the Order, being gathered together to speak of Christ, in fervour of spirit he bade one of them open his mouth in the name of God, and speak of God whate'er the Holy Spirit might inspire in him. When the brother had done his bidding and spoken marvellous things of God, Saint Francis laid silence upon him, and bade another brother do likewise. He yielding obedience, and discoursing subtly of God, Saint Francis in like manner laid silence

upon him, and bade a third discourse of God, the which in like manner began to speak so deeply of the secret things of God, that Saint Francis knew of a surety that, even as the other twain, he spake by the Holy Spirit: and this likewise was set forth by example and a clear sign; for while they thus were speaking, there appeared the blessed Christ in the midst of them in form and fashion of a youth most fair, and blessed them all, and filled them with such grace and sweetness, that they all were rapt away out of themselves, and lay as though dead, taking no heed of aught of this world. Then returning to himself again, Saint Francis said unto them: "My brothers most dear, give thanks to God, who hath willed, by the mouths of the simple, to reveal the treasures of heavenly wisdom; since God it is that openeth the mouth of the dumb, and maketh the tongues of the simple to speak words exceeding wise." Christ appears to the Brothers

Chapter XV

How Saint Clair ate with Saint Francis and the brothers, his companions, in St Mary of the Angels

WHENAS Saint Francis was at Assisi, oftentimes he visited Saint Clare and gave her holy admonishments. And she having exceeding great desire to once break bread with him, oft-times besought him thereto, but he was never willing to grant her this consolation; wherefore his companions, beholding the desire of Saint Clare, said unto Saint Francis: "Father, it

St Francis and St Clare

doth appear to us that this severity accordeth not with heavenly charity: since thou givest not ear unto Sister Clare, a virgin so saintly, so beloved of God, in so slight a matter as breaking bread with thee, and above all bearing in mind that she through thy preaching abandoned the riches and pomps of the world. And of a truth, had she asked of thee a greater boon than this, thou oughtest so to do unto thy spiritual plant." Then replied Saint Francis: "Doth it seem good to you that I should grant her prayer?" Rejoined his companions: "Yea, father, fitting is it that thou grant her this boon and consolation." Then spake Saint Francis: "Since it seems good to you, it seems so likewise unto me. But that she may be the more consoled, I will that this breaking of bread take place in Saint Mary of the Angels; for she has been so long shut up in St Damian that it will rejoice her to see again the house of Saint Mary, where her hair was shorn away and she became the bride of Jesu Christ; and there let us eat together in the name of God." When came the day ordained by him, Saint Clare with one companion passed forth from out the convent, and with the companions of Saint Francis to bear her company came unto Saint Mary of the Angels, and devoutly saluted the Virgin Mary before her altar, where she had been shorn and veiled; so they conducted her to see the House, until such time as the hour for breaking bread was come. And in the meantime Saint Francis let make ready the table on the bare

ground, as he was wont to do. And the hour of breaking bread being come, they set themselves down together, Saint Francis and Saint Clare, and one of the companions of Saint Francis with the companion of Saint Clare, and all the other companions took each his place at the table with all humility. And at the first dish, Saint Francis began to speak of God so sweetly, so sublimely, and so wondrously, that the fulness of divine grace came down on them, and they all were rapt in God. And as they were thus rapt, with eyes and hands uplift to heaven, the folk of Assisi and Bettona and the country round about, saw that Saint Mary of the Angels, and all the House, and the wood that was just hard by the House, were burning brightly, and it seemed as it were a great fire that filled the church and the House and the whole wood together: for the which cause the folk of Assisi ran thither in great haste for to quench the flames, believing of a truth that the whole place was all on fire. But coming close up to the House and finding no fire at all, they entered within and found Saint Francis and Saint Clare and all their company in contemplation rapt in God and sitting around that humble board. Whereby of a truth they understood that this had been a heavenly flame and no earthly one at all, which God had let appear miraculously, for to show and signify the fire of love divine wherewith the souls of those holy brothers and holy nuns were all aflame; wherefore they gat them gone with great consolation

The Brothers and St Clare eat together

The flame of divine love

in their hearts and with holy edifying. Then after some long space, Saint Francis and Saint Clare, together with all the others, returning to themselves again and feeling of good comfort from the spiritual food, took little heed of the food of the body. And, that blessed feast thus ended, Saint Clare, escorted well, returned unto Saint Damian, whereby the sisters, beholding her, had joy exceeding great; for they feared lest Saint Francis should have sent her to rule some other convent, even as he had already sent Sister Agnes, her holy sister, as abbess to rule the convent of Monticelli at Florence: and Saint Francis on a time had said to Saint Clare: "Be thou ready, if so be that I needs must send thee to some other House"; and she, as a daughter of holy obedience, had made answer: "Father, I am at all times ready to go whithersoever thou mayest send me." Wherefore the sisters rejoiced exceedingly when they saw her face again: and thenceforward Saint Clare abode in much consolation.

Chapter XVI

How Saint Francis received the counsel of Saint Clare and of the holy Brother Silvester, that it behoved him by preaching to convert much people; and how he founded the third Order, and preached unto the birds, and made the swallows hold their peace

THE humble servant of Christ, Saint Francis, a short while after his conversion, having already gathered together many companions and

received them into the order, fell into deep thought and much doubting as to what he ought to do: whether to give himself wholly unto prayer, or some time also unto preaching: and on this matter he much desired to learn the will of God. And for that the holy humility that was in him suffered him not to trust over much in himself nor in his own prayers, he thought to search out the will of God through the prayers of others: wherefore he called Brother Masseo, and bespake him thus: "Go unto Sister Clare and tell her on my behalf, that she with certain of her most spiritual companions, should pray devoutly unto God, that it may please Him to show me which of the twain is the better: whether to give myself to preaching or wholly unto prayer. And then go unto Brother Silvester and tell the like to him." This was that Brother Silvester who when he was in the world had seen a cross of gold proceeding from the mouth of Saint Francis, the which reached even unto heaven and the arms thereof unto the ends of the world, and this Brother Silvester was of so great devotion and so great sanctity, that whatsoe'er he asked of God was granted him, and oftentimes he spake with God; wherefore Saint Francis had a great devotion unto him. So Brother Masseo departed, and according to the bidding of Saint Francis carried his message first unto Saint Clare and then unto Brother Silvester. Who, when he had heard thereof, forthwith fell on his knees in prayer, and as he prayed received answer from God, and turned to Brother Masseo,

St Francis seeks counsel

He is enjoined to gain souls

and bespake him thus: "Thus saith the Lord: Say unto Brother Francis that God has not called him to this estate for himself alone, but to the end that he may gain fruit of souls, and that many through him may be saved." With this reply Brother Masseo returned to Saint Clare to learn what she had received of God, and she answered that God had sent to her and her companions the same reply as He had given to Brother Silvester. Whereat Brother Masseo hied him back again to Saint Francis; and Saint Francis received him with exceeding great love, washing his feet and making ready for him the meal, and after he had eaten, Saint Francis called Brother Masseo into the wood; and there kneeled down before him and drew back his hood, stretching out his arms in the shape of a cross, and asked him: "What has my Lord Jesu Christ commanded that I should do?" Replied Brother Masseo: "As unto Brother Silvester, so likewise unto Sister Clare and her sisters, has Christ made answer and revealed: that it is His will that thou go throughout the world to preach, since He hath chosen thee not for thyself alone, but also for the salvation of others." And then Saint Francis, when he had heard this answer and known thereby the will of Jesu Christ, rose up with fervour exceeding great, and said: "Let us be going in the name of God"; and he took for his companions Brother Masseo and Brother Agnolo, holy men. And setting forth with fervent zeal of spirit, taking no thought for road or way, they came unto a little town that was called Savurni-

ano, and Saint Francis set himself to preach, but first he bade the swallows that were twittering keep silence till such time as he had done the preaching; and the swallows were obedient to his word, and he preached there with such fervour that all the men and women of that town minded through their devotion to come after him and leave the town, but Saint Francis suffered them not, saying: "Make not ill haste nor leave your homes; and I will ordain for you what ye should do for the salvation of your souls": and therewith he resolved to found the third Order, for the salvation of all the world. And so leaving them much comforted and with minds firm set on penitence, he departed thence and came unto a place between Cannaio and Bevagno. And as with great fervour he was going on the way, he lifted up his eyes and beheld some trees hard by the road whereon sat a great company of birds well-nigh without number; whereat Saint Francis marvelled, and said to his companions: "Ye shall wait for me here upon the way and I will go to preach unto my little sisters, the birds." And he went unto the field and began to preach unto the birds that were on the ground; and immediately those that were on the trees flew down to him, and they all of them remained still and quiet together, until Saint Francis made an end of preaching: and not even then did they depart, until he had given them his blessing. And according to what Brother Masseo afterwards related unto Brother Jacques da Massa, Saint Francis went among them touching them with

He founds the third Order

his cloak, howbeit none moved from out his place.

The sermon to the birds

The sermon that Saint Francis preached unto them was after this fashion: "My little sisters, the birds, much bounden are ye unto God, your Creator, and alway in every place ought ye to praise Him, for that He hath given you liberty to fly about everywhere, and hath also given you double and triple raiment; moreover He preserved your seed in the ark of Noah, that your race might not perish out of the world; still more are ye beholden to Him for the element of the air which He hath appointed for you; beyond all this, ye sow not, neither do you reap; and God feedeth you, and giveth you the streams and fountains for your drink; the mountains and the valleys for your refuge and the high trees whereon to make your nests; and because ye know not how to spin or sew, God clotheth you, you and your children; wherefore your Creator loveth you much, seeing that He hath bestowed on you so many benefits; and therefore, my little sisters, beware of the sin of ingratitude, and study always to give praises unto God." Whenas Saint Francis spake these words to them, those birds began all of them to open their beaks, and stretch their necks, and spread their wings, and reverently bend their heads down to the ground, and by their acts and by their songs to show that the holy Father gave them joy exceeding great. And Saint Francis rejoiced with them, and was glad, and marvelled much at so great a company of birds and their most beautiful diversity and their good heed and sweet friendliness, for the which

cause he devoutly praised their Creator in them. At the last, having ended the preaching, Saint Francis made over them the sign of the cross, and gave them leave to go away; and thereby all the birds with wondrous singing rose up in the air; and then, in the fashion of the cross that Saint Francis had made over them, divided themselves into four parts; and the one part flew toward the East, and the other towards the West, and the other towards the South, and the fourth towards the North, and each flight went on its way singing wondrous songs; signifying thereby that even as Saint Francis, the standard-bearer of the Cross of Christ, had preached unto them, and made over them the sign of the cross, after the pattern of which they separated themselves unto the four parts of the world: even so the preaching of the Cross of Christ, renewed by Saint Francis, would be carried by him and the brothers throughout all the world; the which brothers, after the fashion of the birds, possessing nothing of their own in this world, commit their lives wholly unto the providence of God.

St Francis, the standard-bearer of Christ

Chapter XVII

How a little boy-brother, while Saint Francis was praying in the night, saw Christ and the Virgin Mary and many other saints hold converse with him

A LITTLE boy, very pure and innocent, was received into the Order, while Saint Francis was yet alive; and he abode in a little

The vision of St Francis

House, wherein of necessity the brothers slept on mats. It befell on a time that Saint Francis came to the said House, and in the evening, after Compline, lay down to sleep, to the intent that he might be able to rise up in the night to pray while the other brothers slept, as it was his wont to do. The aforesaid little boy set it in his heart diligently to keep watch upon the ways of Saint Francis, that he might come to know of his sanctity, and chiefly that he might learn what he did by night when he arose. And to the end that sleep might not play him false, that little boy laid him down to sleep close to Saint Francis, and tied his cord to the cord of Saint Francis, for to be ware when he got up; and of this Saint Francis perceived naught. But at night in his first sleep, when all the other brothers were sleeping, he arose and found his cord thus tied: and softly he loosed it, so that the little boy was not aware thereof, and Saint Francis went out alone into the wood that was hard by the House, and entered into a little cell that was therein, and set himself to pray. After some short space the little boy awoke, and finding the cord unloosed, and Saint Francis gone, arose and went in search of him: and finding the door open that led into the wood, he deemed that Saint Francis had gone thither, and so entered into the wood. And coming close up to the place where Saint Francis was praying, he began to hear much discourse; and drawing nigher for to see and learn what it was he heard, he beheld a marvellous light that shone round about Saint

Francis, and therein he saw Christ and the Virgin Mary and Saint John the Baptist and the Evangelist, and a great multitude of angels, speaking with Saint Francis. When this he saw and heard, the little boy fell on the ground in a deep swoon; so when the mystery of this holy vision was ended, Saint Francis, returning to the House, stumbled upon the little boy lying as though dead upon the ground; and in pity lifted him up and bore him in his arms, as doth the good shepherd with his sheep. Learning thereafter from him how he had seen the vision set forth above, he bade him reveal it unto no man so long as he should be alive. And the little boy grew up in great favour with God and devotion to Saint Francis, and became a man of worth in the Order, and after the death of Saint Francis he revealed unto the brothers the vision set forth above.

St Francis holds a general chapter

Chapter XVIII

Of the marvellous chapter that Saint Francis held at Saint Mary of the Angels, whereat were more than five thousand brothers

THE faithful servant of Christ, Francis, on a time held a general chapter at Saint Mary of the Angels, at the which chapter were gathered together more than five thousand brothers; and thither came Saint Dominic, head and founder of the Order of the Preaching Brothers, who was then on his way from Borgogna to Rome. And hearing of the Congregation of the chapter

called "the Chapter of the Trellises"

that Saint Francis was holding on the plain of Saint Mary of the Angels, he went to see it with seven brothers of his Order. There was also at the said chapter a cardinal most devoted to Saint Francis, who had prophesied unto him that he would be Pope, and it so came to pass; the which cardinal had come of set purpose from Perugia, where the Court was, to Assisi; every day he came to see Saint Francis and his brothers, and sometimes he sang the Mass, and sometimes he preached unto the brothers in chapter, and the said cardinal felt exceeding great joy and devotion whensoever he came to visit this holy company. And beholding the brothers sitting on the plain round about Saint Mary's in companies, here forty, there a hundred, there eighty together, all busied in discourse of God, in prayers, in tears, in works of love, and all abiding in such silence and such modesty that there was heard no noise or sound of contention; and marvelling at so great a multitude so set in order, with tears and deep devotion, he said: "Of a truth this is the camp and the army of the knights of God." Nor was there heard in so great a multitude or idle speech or foolish jest, but, wheresoe'er a company of brothers was gathered together, they either prayed, or said the office, and bewailed their sins or those of their benefactors, or discoursed concerning the salvation of souls. In the camp were roofs of willows and rush-mats, set apart in groups according to the brothers of diverse provinces; and thereby was this chapter called the Chapter of the Trellises, or of the

Rush-mats; their bed was the bare ground, and for such as had it a little straw, their pillows were stones or logs of wood. For the which cause so great devotion towards them was felt by whoso heard or saw, and so great was the fame of their sanctity, that from the Court of the Pope which was at that time in Perugia, and from the other parts of the valley of Spoleto, there came many counts, barons, and knights, and other gentle folk, and many country folk, and cardinals and bishops and abbots with many other clergy, for to see this holy gathering, so great and so humble, such as the world had never seen before, of so many holy men together: and chiefest of all they came to see the head and most holy father of that holy band, the which had robbed the world of such fair prey, and gathered together so devout and fair a flock to follow in the foot-steps of the true Shepherd Jesu Christ. The chapter general being then all assembled, the holy father of all and minister general, Saint Francis, in fervour of spirit set forth the word of God: and preached unto them in a loud voice as the Holy Spirit made him to speak; and as argument of his sermon he set forth unto them these words: "My little children, great things have we promised unto God, much greater far hath God promised unto us, if we observe what we have promised unto Him; and of a surety shall we behold what hath been promised unto us. Short-lived is the joy of the world; the pain that follows it is everlasting; little are the pains of this life, but the glory of the other life is infin-

"The army of the knights of God"

St Francis' command

ite." And on these words preaching most devoutly, he comforted the brothers and turned their hearts into obedience and reverence for holy Mother Church, and unto brotherly love, to pray God for all men, and to have patience in the adversities of the world, and temperance in prosperity, to observe modesty and angelic chastity, and to have peace and concord with God and with men and with their own conscience, and the love and practice of most holy poverty. And therewith he said unto them: "I command you, by the merit of holy obedience, all ye who be here gathered together, that no one of you take care or thought for aught to eat or for aught of the needs of the body, but turn all your thoughts to prayer and praise of God: and cast all your care for your body upon Him, for He careth tenderly for you." And they all received this commandment with glad heart and joyful countenance, and done the sermon of Saint Francis, they all fell down in prayer. Whereby Saint Dominic, who was present at all these things, marvelled exceedingly at the commandment of Saint Francis and deemed him indiscreet, not knowing how to think in what manner so great a multitude could live without taking thought or care for the needs of the body. But the chief Shepherd, Christ, the Blessed One, desiring to show what care He has for His sheep, and what tender love for His poor ones, straightway put it into the hearts of the folk of Perugia, of Spoleto, of Fuligno, of Spello and of Assisi, and the rest of the country round about, to bring food and drink

unto this holy company. And lo! all at once from the parts aforesaid came men with sumpter beasts, horses and carts, with loads of bread, of wine, of honey-combs, and cheese, and other good things to eat, according as the poor of Christ had need. Besides this, brought they napkins, pitchers, cups, glasses and other vessels, to serve the needs of so great a multitude: and he deemed himself blessed whoso could bring most or serve most diligently; in such sort that even the knights and the barons and other gentle folk that came to see, did service unto them with great devotion and humility. For the which cause, Saint Dominic, seeing these things, and knowing of a truth that God's Providence was working in them, humbly repented him that he had falsely judged Saint Francis to be indiscreet; and coming before him, he knelt down, and humbly told his fault, and added: "Of a truth God hath especial care of these holy poor little ones, and I knew it not; and from now henceforth I promise to observe the holy gospel poverty; and in the name of God I curse all the brothers of my Order who in the said Order shall presume to hold property." So was Saint Dominic much edified by the faith of the most holy Francis, and by the obedience and the poverty of so great and well-ordered a company, and by the divine Providence, and the rich abundance of all good things. In the same chapter it was told unto Saint Francis that many of the brothers wore shirts of mail on their bare flesh, and bands of iron, for the which reason many were weak and

St Francis and St Dominic

St Dominic's repentance

some were dying thereby, and many were let and hindered from prayer. Wherefore Saint Francis, like a most prudent father, commanded by holy obedience that whoso had either shirt of mail or band of iron, should take it off and lay it down before him, and even so did they; and there were counted up full five hundred shirts of iron; and many more bands, both for the arms and for the loins; so that they made a great heap thereof; and Saint Francis let leave them there. After that the chapter was ended, Saint Francis, strengthening them in good works, and teaching them how they ought to escape out of this world without sin, sent them back again unto their provinces, with the blessing of God and his own, all consoled with spiritual joy.

Chapter XIX

How the vineyard of the priest of Rieti, in whose house Saint Francis prayed, was robbed and despoiled of its grapes by the much folk that came to him; and then miraculously yielded more wine than ever before, even as Saint Francis had promised him. And how God revealed unto Saint Francis that at his death he should inherit paradise

SAINT FRANCIS being on a time grievously afflicted in his eyes, Cardinal Ugolino, protector of the Order, for the great tenderness that he bore him, wrote unto him to come to him in Rieti, wherein dwelt most cunning physicians for the eyes. Then Saint

Francis, having received the letter of the cardinal, gat him first to Saint Damian's, where was Saint Clare, the devout bride of Christ, for to give her some consolation and thereafter go to the cardinal. Saint Francis having won there, his eyes grew so much worse on the next ensuing night that he could not see the light a whit; wherefore sith he could not go upon his way, Saint Clare let build for him a little cell of reeds, wherein he might the better rest himself. But Saint Francis, what with the pain of his infirmity, and what with the multitude of rats, that did him exceeding great annoy, could find, nor day, nor night, no rest at all. And having yet more of such pains and tribulation to endure, he began to think and understand that this was a scourge from God for his sins; and to thank God with all his heart and with his mouth, and anon cried with a loud voice, saying: "My Lord, of all this am I deserving, and much worse. My Lord Jesu Christ, Thou good Shepherd, who dost show forth Thy mercy to us sinners in diverse pains and anguish of the body, grant unto me, Thy little sheep, such grace and virtue that through no infirmity and agony or pain may I ever part from Thee." While thus he prayed, there came a voice from heaven that said: "Francis, answer me: if all the world were gold, and all the seas and streams and fountains were balm, and all the mountains and hills and rocks were precious stones; and thou shouldst find a treasure yet more noble than these things, as much as gold is nobler

St Francis sore afflicted

St Francis promised eternal life

than earth, and balm than water, and precious stones than mountains and rocks, and if for thine infirmity that nobler treasure were given thee, wouldst thou not be well content therewith and right glad?" Replied Saint Francis: "Lord, I am not worthy of so precious a treasure"; and the voice of God spake unto him: "Rejoice, Francis, for this is the treasure of eternal life, the which I have laid up for thee, and from this hour I give it thee in possession; and this infirmity and affliction is the earnest of that blessed treasure." Then Saint Francis called his companion, with great joy in so glorious a promise, and said: "Let us go unto the cardinal," but first of all consoling Saint Clare with holy words, and humbly taking leave of her, he set out on the way to Rieti. And when he drew nigh thereto, so great a press of people came out to meet him, that he would not for this cause enter into the city; but gat him to a church that lay without the city, it might be a two miles' space. The city folk, coming to know that he was gone to the said church, ran together for to see him, in such sort that the vineyard of the church was spoiled altogether, and the grapes of it were all plucked; whereof the priest was sore grieving in his heart, and repented him that he had received Saint Francis into the church. The thought of the priest being revealed of God unto Saint Francis, he let call him, and said: "Dear father, how many measures of wine doth this vineyard yield thee, the year it yields its

best?" Replied the priest: "Twelve measures." Quoth Saint Francis: "I pray thee, Father, that thou bear patiently with me if I tarry here some days, seeing that I find here much repose; and let whoso will pluck of the grapes of this thy vineyard, for the love of God and me, his poor little one; and I promise thee, in the name of my Lord Jesu Christ, that it shall yield thee twenty measures every year." And thus did Saint Francis in return for his sojourning there, because of the great fruit of souls that was manifestly gathered of the folk that resorted thither; whereof many departed drunken with love divine, and abandoned the world. The priest trusted the promise of Saint Francis, and freely gave up the garden unto all that came to him. And it was a marvel to see how the vineyard was all spoiled and plucked, so that scarce any bunches of grapes were found left. The time of the vintage came; and the priest gathered in such bunches as remained, and put them in the vat and trod them out, and according to the promise of Saint Francis got thereout twenty measures of the best wine. By this miracle it was manifestly set forth, for men to understand, that even as the vineyard despoiled of grapes abounded in wine, through the merits of Saint Francis; even so the Christian people, that had grown barren of virtue by reason of sin, through the merits and teaching of Saint Francis oftentimes abounded in the good fruits of penitence.

The miracle of the vineyard

Chapter XX

Of a vision wondrous fair, seen by a young brother, the which did hold the cowl in such hate that he minded to put off the habit and leave the Order

The wondrous vision

A VERY noble and tender youth entered into the Order of Saint Francis: the which after some days, through the prompting of the devil, began to hold the habit that he bore in such hate, that it seemed unto him he wore a sack most vile; the sleeves he abhorred, he hated the hood, and the length and the roughness thereof were unto him as a load unbearable. And his mislike of the religious life increasing more and more, he was purposed to put off the habit and return to the world. Now already it was his wont, according as his master had taught him, so often as he passed before the altar of the convent, whereon was kept the Body of Christ, to kneel with great reverence, and draw back his hood, and with arms crossed bow himself down. It befell that on the night whereon he was to go away and leave the Order, he must needs pass before the altar of the convent; and as he passed, he kneeled him down as was his wont and did reverence. And forthwith he was rapt in spirit, and God showed unto him a wondrous vision: in that he saw before him as it were a countless multitude of saints, like a procession, two and two, clad in beauteous robes of precious stuffs, and their faces and their hands shone like the

sun, and they marched to the songs and chants of angels. Among these saints were twain more nobly clad and adorned than all the rest; and they were wrapt around with so much brightness that they wrought exceeding great amazement in whoso looked on them; and nigh to the end of the procession he saw one adorned with great glory that he seemed a new-made knight, more honoured than they all. The youth beholding the vision aforesaid, marvelled exceedingly and knew not what this procession might portend, and dared not ask, but stood all mazed for very sweetness. Howbeit when all the procession had passed by, he took courage and ran after the last of them, and with great fear asked them, saying: "Dear friends, I pray you of your good pleasure to tell me who are these folk so wonderful that go in this worshipful procession." They made answer: "Know, little son, that we be all Brothers Minor coming from the glory of paradise." And again he asked: "Who be those twain that shine more than the others?" They answered him: "These are Saint Francis and Saint Antony: and this last one that thou seest so honoured is a holy brother who died of late: the which, for that valiantly he fought against temptations, and persevered even unto the end, we are leading in triumph to the glory of paradise, and these robes of precious stuffs so beautiful, that we wear, have been given us by God in lieu of the rough tunics that we wore with patience in the religious life; and the glorious brightness that thou seest in us is given us of God for the

The meaning of the vision

The fierce wolf

humility and patience, and for the holy poverty and obedience and chastity, that we kept even unto the end. Wherefore, little son, let it not seem a hard matter to thee to wear the sackcloth of religion that beareth such good fruit; seeing that, if with the sackcloth of Saint Francis for the love of Christ thou despise the world, and mortify the flesh, and strive valiantly against the evil one, thou shalt together with us have even such a robe as this, and such brightness of glory." And these words spoken, the youth returned to himself again; and taking comfort from the vision, chased far from him all temptation, confessed his fault before the guardian and the brothers, and from thenceforth desired the roughness of penitence and of dress, and ended his days in the Order in great sanctity.

Chapter XXI

Of the most holy miracle that Saint Francis wrought when he converted the fierce wolf of Agobio.

WHAT time Saint Francis abode in the city of Agobio, there appeared in the country of Agobio an exceeding great wolf, terrible and fierce, the which not only devoured animals, but also men, in so much that all the city folk stood in great fear, sith oft-times he came near to the city, and all men when they went out arrayed them in arms as it were for the battle, and yet withal they might not avail to defend them against him whensoe'er any chanced on him alone;

for fear of this wolf they were come to such a pass that none durst go forth of that place. For the which matter, Saint Francis having compassion on the people of that land, wished to go forth unto that wolf, albeit the townsfolk all gave counsel against it: and making the sign of the most holy cross he went forth from that place with his companions, putting all his trust in God. And the others misdoubting to go further, Saint Francis took the road to the place where the wolf lay. And lo! in the sight of many of the townsfolk that had come out to see this miracle, the said wolf made at Saint Francis with open mouth: and coming up to him, Saint Francis made over him the sign of the most holy cross, and called him to him, and bespake him thus: "Come hither, brother wolf: I command thee in the name of Christ that thou do no harm, nor to me nor to any one." O wondrous thing! Whenas Saint Francis had made the sign of the cross, right so the terrible wolf shut his jaws and stayed his running: and when he was bid, came gently as a lamb and lay him down at the feet of Saint Francis. Thereat Saint Francis thus bespake him: "Brother wolf, much harm hast thou wrought in these parts and done grievous ill, spoiling and slaying the creatures of God, without His leave: and not alone hast thou slain and devoured the brute beasts, but hast dared to slay men, made in the image of God; for the which cause thou art deserving of the gibbet as a thief and a most base murderer; and all men cry out and murmur against thee and all this

St Francis goes forth to the wolf

He subdues the wolf

land is thine enemy. But I would fain, brother wolf, make peace between thee and these; so that thou mayest no more offend them, and they may forgive thee all thy past offences, and nor men nor dogs pursue thee any more." At these words the wolf with movements of body, tail, and eyes, and by the bending of his head, gave sign of his assent to what Saint Francis said, and of his will to abide thereby. Then spake Saint Francis again: "Brother wolf, sith it pleaseth thee to make and hold this peace, I promise thee that I will see to it that the folk of this place give thee food alway so long as thou shalt live, so that thou suffer not hunger any more; for that I wot well that through hunger hast thou wrought all this ill. But sith I win for thee this grace, I will, brother wolf, that thou promise me to do none hurt to any more, be he man or beast; dost promise me this?" And the wolf gave clear token by the bowing of his head that he promised. Then quoth Saint Francis: "Brother wolf, I will that thou plight me troth for this promise, that I may trust thee full well." And Saint Francis stretching forth his hand to take pledge of his troth, the wolf lifted up his right paw before him and laid it gently on the hand of Saint Francis, giving thereby such sign of good faith as he was able. Then quoth Saint Francis: "Brother wolf, I bid thee in the name of Jesu Christ come now with me, nothing doubting, and let us go stablish this peace in God's name." And the wolf obedient set forth with him, in fashion as a gentle lamb; whereat

the townsfolk made mighty marvel, beholding. And straightway the bruit of it was spread through all the city, so that all the people, men-folk and women-folk, great and small, young and old, gat them to the market place for to see the wolf with Saint Francis. And the people being gathered all together, Saint Francis rose up to preach, avizing them among other matters how for their sins God suffered such things to be, and pestilences also: and how far more parlous is the flame of hell, the which must vex the damned eternally, than is the fury of the wolf that can but slay the body; how much then should men fear the jaws of hell, when such a multitude stands sore adread of the jaws of one so small a beast? Then turn ye, beloved, unto God, and work out a fit repentance for your sins; and God will set you free from the wolf in this present time, and in time to come from out the fires of hell." And done the preaching, Saint Francis, said: "Give ear, my brothers: brother wolf, who standeth here before ye, hath promised me and plighted troth to make his peace with you, and to offend no more in any thing; and do ye promise him to give him every day whate'er he needs: and I am made his surety unto you that he will keep this pact of peace right steadfastly." Then promised all the folk with one accord to give him food abidingly. Then quoth Saint Francis to the wolf before them all: "And thou, brother wolf, dost thou make promise to keep firm this pact of peace, that thou offend not man nor beast nor any

and makes a pact of peace with him

The joy of the people

creature?" And the wolf knelt him down and bowed his head: and with gentle movements of his body, tail, and eyes, gave sign as best he could that he would keep their pact entire. Quoth Saint Francis: "Brother wolf, I wish that as thou hast pledged me thy faith to this promise without the gate, even so shouldest thou pledge me thy faith to thy promise before all the people, and that thou play me not false for my promise, and the surety that I have given for thee." Then the wolf lifting up his right paw, laid it in the hand of Saint Francis. Therewith, this act, and the others set forth above, wrought such great joy and marvel in all the people, both through devotion to the saint, and through the newness of the miracle, and through the peace with the wolf, that all began to lift up their voices unto heaven praising and blessing God, that had sent Saint Francis unto them, who by his merits had set them free from the jaws of the cruel beast. And thereafter this same wolf lived two years in Agobio; and went like a tame beast in and out the houses, from door to door, without doing hurt to any or any doing hurt to him, and was courteously nourished by the people; and as he passed thuswise through the country and the houses, never did any dog bark behind him. At length, after a two years' space, brother wolf died of old age: whereat the townsfolk sorely grieved, sith marking him pass so gently through the city, they minded them the better of the virtue and the sanctity of Saint Francis.

Chapter XXII

How Saint Francis tamed the wild turtle-doves

St Francis and the turtle-doves

IT befell on a day that a certain young man had caught many turtle-doves: and as he was carrying them for sale, Saint Francis, who had ever a tender pity for gentle creatures, met him, and looking on those turtle-doves with pitying eyes, said to the youth: "I pray thee give them me, that birds so gentle, unto which the Scripture likeneth chaste and humble and faithful souls, may not fall into the hands of cruel men that would kill them." Forthwith, inspired of God, he gave them all to Saint Francis; and he receiving them into his bosom, began to speak tenderly unto them: "O my sisters, simple-minded turtle-doves, innocent and chaste, why have ye let yourselves be caught? Now would I fain deliver you from death and make you nests, that ye may be fruitful and multiply, according to the commandments of your Creator." And Saint Francis went and made nests for them all: and they abiding therein, began to lay their eggs and hatch them before the eyes of the brothers: and so tame were they, they dwelt with Saint Francis and all the other brothers as though they had been fowls that had always fed from their hands, and never did they go away until Saint Francis with his blessing gave them leave to go. And to the young man who had given them to him, Saint Francis said: "My little son, thou wilt yet be a brother in this Order and do precious

St Francis, the watchful Shepherd

service unto Jesu Christ. And so it came to pass; for the said youth became a brother and lived in the Order in great sanctity.

Chapter XXIII

How Saint Francis delivered the brother that was in sin with the devil

AS Saint Francis was on a time at prayer in the House of Portiuncula, through divine revelation he saw the whole House surrounded and besieged by devils, as it were by a great army, but no one of them could win an entrance into the House; for the brothers were of so great sanctity, that the devils could find none within whom to enter. But as they so continued, it happened on a day that one of these brothers was offended with another, and thought in his heart how he might accuse him and take vengeance upon him; for the which cause, while his heart was devising this wicked thought, the devil, finding the door open, entered into the House and set himself upon the neck of that brother. But the heedful and pitying Shepherd, who was ever keeping watch over his flock, seeing that the wolf had entered to devour his little sheep, at once let call to him that brother, and bade him forthwith disclose the venom of hate he had conceived against his neighbour, through the which he had fallen into the hands of the enemy. Whereat he being affrighted at seeing that the holy Father knew the secret of his heart, discovered unto him all its venom and

malice, and acknowledged his fault, and humbly begged for penance and mercy; and this done, whenas he was absolved from his sin and had received penance, immediately, before the face of Saint Francis, the devil was away; and the brother thus set free from the hands of that cruel beast, through the loving-kindness of the good Shepherd, gave thanks to God; and going back corrected and admonished to the flock of the holy Shepherd, he lived thereafter in great sanctity.

St Francis and the Soldan

Chapter XXIV

How Saint Francis won over to the faith the Soldan of Babylon

WROUGHT on by zeal for the faith of Christ and the desire of martyrdom, Saint Francis went on a time over sea with twelve his companions, to get them straight to the Soldan of Babylon, and they came to a land of the Saracens, where the passes were guarded by men so cruel that none of Christian folk that passed that way might avail to scape from death; but it pleased God that they were not slain, but taken alive, and beaten and bound were brought before the Soldan. And being come before him, Saint Francis, taught of the Holy Spirit, preached so divinely of the faith of Christ, that for the sake thereof was he willing to go even through the fire. Whereby the Soldan began to feel exceeding great devotion toward him, for the constancy of his faith, as for the contempt of the world that he saw in him (for that he would

His promise to the Soldan

take of him no gift, albeit so very poor), and eke for the fervour of martyrdom that he saw in him. From that time forth the Soldan heard him gladly and prayed him that oft-times he would come before him, freely granting to him and his companions leave to preach wheresoever they would; and he gave them a sign whereby they might be safe from the hurt of any man. Having such free license, St Francis sent his brothers and other companions two by two into divers parts of the Saracens to preach the faith of Christ. Seeing in the end that he could reap no more fruit in those parts, Saint Francis by divine revelation set himself with all his companions to return to the land of the faithful; and when they were all gathered together, he came again to the Soldan and took leave of him to depart. And therewithal said the Soldan unto him: "Brother Francis, I would gladly turn me to the faith of Christ, but I fear to do so now; for if these were ware of it, they would kill both thee and me with all thy company; and inasmuch as thou canst yet do much of good, and I have certain matters of great weight that I must needs array, I would not now work both my death and thine, but teach me now how I may be saved; sith ready am I to do all that thou mayest lay on me." Then spake St Francis: "My lord, I must now go from you; but after that I have returned to my country and have gone to heaven, by the grace of God, after my death, then, according as it shall please God, will I send thee two of my brothers, at whose hands thou shalt

receive the holy Baptism of Christ, and shalt be saved, even as my Lord Jesu Christ hath revealed to me. In this mean time do thou keep thyself free from all let and hindrance, to the end that when the grace of God shall come to thee, it may find thee prepared for faith and the devout life"; and this he promised to perform, and eke performed it. This done, St Francis returned with that venerable company of his holy companions, and when some years had gone by Saint Francis, by the death of the body, gave up his soul to God. And the Soldan falling sick, waited for the promise of Saint Francis and set guards at certain passes; and gave order that if two brothers should appear in the habit of Saint Francis, they should straightway be brought to him. At that very time Saint Francis appeared to two brothers and bade them go without delay to the Soldan and take care for his salvation, according as he had promised; the which brothers straightway set forth, and crossing the sea were brought to the Soldan by the guards aforesaid, and when the Soldan saw them he had exceeding great joy, and said: "Now I know of a truth that God hath sent His servants for my salvation, according to the promise that Saint Francis made me through divine revelation." Thereon being taught of these brothers in the faith of Christ and receiving holy Baptism, thus re-born in Christ he died of that sickness, and his soul was saved through the merits and the prayers of Saint Francis.

The Soldan receives Baptism

Chapter XXV

How Saint Francis miraculously healed one that was a leper both in soul and body; and what the soul said to him, as it went up into heaven

The perverse leper

THE true disciple of Christ, Saint Francis, while he lived in this miserable life, strove with all his might to follow Christ, the perfect Master; whence it befell oftentimes through the divine working, that of whomsoever he healed the body, God healed the soul in the self-same hour, even as it is read of Christ. And because he not only served the lepers of his own will, but moreover had ordained that the brothers of his Order, whether staying or going throughout the world, should serve the lepers for the love of Christ, who willed for our sakes to be accounted a leper, it befell on a time that in a certain House, hard by to that wherein Saint Francis then abode, the brothers were serving the lepers and the sick in an hospital, wherein was a leper so impatient, and so unbearable, and so perverse, that all men deemed—and even so it was—that of a surety he was possessed of the devil; for so shamefully did he assail with vile words and blows whoso did him service, and, what is still worse, he blasphemed with foul abuse the blessed Christ and His most holy Mother, the Virgin Mary, so that in no wise could be found any that could endure to serve him or was willing thereunto. And albeit the brothers strove with patience to endure the insults and injuries to their own proper selves, for to increase the merit

of patience, nevertheless since their consciences might no longer endure those heaped on Christ and on His Mother, they all at once resolved to leave the said leper; but they wished not so to do until such time as they had signified the same in order unto Saint Francis, who at that time abode in a House a-nigh thereto. And when they had told him, Saint Francis went to this leper so perverse; and coming close up to him, saluted him, saying: "God give thee peace, my brother most dear." Replied the leper: "What peace may I have of God, who hath taken from me peace and all good things, and hath made me stinking and rotten altogether?" And Saint Francis said: "My little son, have patience; for the infirmities of the body are given by God in this world for the salvation of souls, seeing that they are of great merit when borne patiently." Replied the sick man: "And how can I bear with patience the continual pain that racks me day and night? And not only am I afflicted with mine infirmity; but the brothers whom thou hast given me to do me service, deal worse with me, and do not serve me as they ought." Then Saint Francis, knowing by revelation that this leper was possessed with the evil spirit, went and set himself to pray and prayed God devoutly for him. And his prayer ended, he returned to him again, and spake thus: "My son, I will myself do thee service, seeing thou art not content with the others." "I am willing," quoth the sick man; "but what canst thou do more than these others?" Replied Saint Francis: "What-

St Francis and the leper

He heals the leper

soever thou dost wish, that will I do." Quoth the leper: "I wish that thou wash me all over; for I stink so vilely that I cannot abide myself." Thereupon Saint Francis forthwith let boil water with many sweet-smelling herbs; then stripped him and began to wash him with his own hands, and another brother poured out the water; and it came to pass by a divine miracle, that wheresoe'er Saint Francis touched him with his holy hands, the leprosy departed, and the flesh remained perfectly whole. And as the flesh began to heal, even so began the soul to be healed also; whereby the leper, seeing that he was beginning to be cured, began to feel great compunction and repentance for his sins, and began most bitterly to lament; so that while his body was being cleansed without from the leprosy by the washing of the water, so his mind within was cleansed from sin by amendment and by tears. And being every whit made whole both in body and soul, he humbly confessed his sin; and weeping, said in a loud voice: "Woe is me, that am worthy of hell, for the insults and injuries that I have said and done unto the brothers, and for the impatience and blasphemies that I have spoken against God"; wherefore for fifteen days he continued in bitter wailing for his sins, and in calling on the mercy of God, confessing himself unto the priest with his whole heart. And Saint Francis beholding so clear a miracle, that God had worked by his hands, gave thanks to God, and departed thence, going into a far country; because for humility's sake he wished

to shun all glory, and in all his works he sought only the honour and glory of God, and not his own. Thereafter, for so it was the will of God, the said leper, healed in body and soul, after fifteen days of his penitence, fell sick of another infirmity, and died a holy death armed with the sacraments of the church; and his soul on its way to Paradise appeared in the air unto Saint Francis, as he was at prayer, and said unto him: "Dost thou know me again?" "Who art thou?" quoth Saint Francis. "I am the leper whom Christ, the Blessed One, healed through thy merits, and now I go unto life eternal; blessed be thy soul and body: and blessed be thy holy words and works; for through thee shall many souls in the world be saved: and know of a truth that there is no day in the world wherein the holy Angels and the other Saints give not praise to God for the holy fruits that thou and thy Order gather in in diverse parts of the world; wherefore be comforted, and give thanks to God and abide steadfast with His blessing." And saying these words, he passed into heaven; and Saint Francis abode in much consolation.

The soul's thanksgiving

Chapter XXVI

How Saint Francis converted three robbers that were murderers, and made brothers of them; and of the most noble vision that was seen by one of them, the which was a most holy brother

IT befell on a time that Saint Francis was going through the desert of Borgo San Sepolcro, and as he passed by a village called

The three robbers

Monte Casale, there came unto him a youth, noble and tender, and said to him: "Father, right willingly would I become one of your brothers." Replied Saint Francis: "My son, thou art a youth, tender and noble, it may well be that thou couldest not endure our hardships and our poverty." And quoth he: "Father, are ye not men even as I? wherefore, as ye endure, even so shall I be able with the grace of Jesu Christ." Well pleased was Saint Francis with this answer: so blessing him, he forthwith received him into the Order, and gave to him the name of Brother Angel; and this youth bore him so graciously that a short while thereafter Saint Francis made him guardian in the aforesaid House of Monte Casale. Now at that time there dwelt in those parts three notorious robbers, who wrought much evil in that country; the which came on a day to the said House of the brothers, and besought the said Brother Angel, the guardian, to give them food to eat; and the guardian with harsh reproof, answered them after this fashion: "Ye thieves and cruel murderers, ye be not ashamed to rob others of the fruits of their labours: but likewise, as men insolent and bold, ye would devour the alms bestowed upon the servants of God; in sooth, ye are not worthy that the earth should hold you, since ye respect nor men nor God who created you: then go your ways and see ye come not here again"; whereby they went away disquieted and full of ire. And behold, Saint Francis returned from abroad with a

wallet of bread and a little flask of wine, that he and his companion had begged: and when the guardian recounted unto him how he had driven the men away, Saint Francis reproved him sternly, saying that he had borne him cruelly therein: "Because sinners are brought back to God better by gentleness than by cruel reproofs; wherefore our master Jesu Christ, whose Gospel we have promised to observe, saith that they that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick; and that he was not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance: wherefore he oftentimes ate with them. Seeing then, that thou hast done against charity and against the holy Gospel of Christ, I command thee by holy obedience, that incontinent thou take this wallet of bread that I have begged and this little flask of wine, and search diligently for them over mountains and valleys until thou find them, and give them all this bread and wine as from me; and then kneel thee down before them and humbly confess thy fault of cruelty; and then pray them on my behalf that they do no more ill, but fear God nor offend Him any more: and if this they will do, I promise to provide for their needs and to give them food and drink abidingly: and when thou hast said this unto them, return hither again in all humility." While the said guardian was going for to do his bidding, Saint Francis set himself to pray, beseeching God to soften the hearts of those robbers and convert them to penitence. So the obedient guardian came up with them and offered

The robbers reproved

Their penitence

to them the bread and the wine, and did and said all that Saint Francis had laid upon him. And sith it was the will of God, these robbers as they ate the alms of Saint Francis, began to say among themselves: "Woe unto us, miserable wretches! how grievous are the pains of hell that await us, who go about not only robbing our neighbours, and beating and wounding, but likewise slaying them; yet none the less for such evil deeds and so great wickedness, as we commit, we feel no whit remorse of conscience, neither fear of God; and lo! this holy brother that hath come to us and humbly hath confessed his fault for diverse words he justly spake against our wickedness; and more than this, hath brought us bread and wine and so bounteous a promise from the holy Father; of a truth these be holy brothers of God, and merit the paradise of God; and we be sons of eternal perdition and merit the pains of hell, and every day increase our own damnation; and we know not whether we can turn us from the sins that we have done up till now, unto the mercy of God." As one among them spake these and the like words, quoth the others: "In very sooth thou dost speak true, but come, what is it that we needs must do?" "Let us go," said one, "unto Saint Francis; and if he gives us hope that we may find mercy of God for our sins, let us do whatsoever he bids us, and so may we be able to deliver our souls from the pains of hell." This counsel was pleasing unto the others; and so they all three being agreed,

gat them in haste to Saint Francis, and bespake him thus: "Father, for the multitude of the sins and wickednesses that we have committed, we deem it not possible to return to the mercy of God; but if thou hast any hope that God will receive us into His mercy, lo! we be ready to do whatsoever thou shalt tell us, and to do penance with thee." Thereat Saint Francis, dealing lovingly with them and in kindly fashion, comforted them with many examples: and making them assured of the mercy of God, promised them of a surety to obtain it for them from God, and setting forth to them how that the mercy of God is infinite; and that if we had sins without number, yet the mercy of God is greater than our sins, according to the Gospel; and the Apostle Saint Paul saith: "Christ, the blessed One, came into the world to save sinners." Through the which words and the like admonishments, the said three robbers renounced the devil and all his works; and Saint Francis received them into the Order and they began to do great penance: and two of them lived but a short while after their conversion, and went to Paradise. But the third surviving, and bethinking him of his sins, gave himself up to work out such penance that for fifteen years continually, save only in the common Lenten fast, the which he kept together with the other brothers, he fasted three days in the week on bread and water, going always bare-foot, with one tunic only on his back, nor sleeping ever after matins. About this time Saint Francis passed away out of this

St Francis and the robbers

Their conversion

miserable life. Now when this man for many years had continued in such penances, behold! on a night, after matins, there came upon him so great a temptation to sleep, that in no way could he resist it and keep watch as he was wont. At the last not being able to resist sleep any longer, nor to pray, he went to his bed to sleep; and as soon as he had laid his head down, straightway was he rapt, and carried away in spirit to a very high mountain wherein was a precipice exceeding deep, and on this side and on that, rocks rugged and broken, and sharp-pointed stones jutting out of the rocks: such that it was a fearsome sight to look down this precipice. And the angel that was leading the brother pushed him and threw him down the precipice: and he falling down and rebounding from rock to rock, and from stone to stone, came at last to the bottom of this precipice, torn limb from limb, and dashed all to pieces, as it seemed to him. And as thus he lay in evil plight upon the ground, he that led him said to him: "Get thee up, for thou needs must take a longer journey yet." Replied the brother: "Methinks thou dost lack discerning, and art exceeding cruel, who seest me like to die from the fall that hath so broken me and yet doth bid me rise"; and the angel came near unto him, and touching him, made all his limbs thoroughly whole, and healed him. And after this he showed him a great plain full of sharp and cutting stones, and thorns and briars: and told him that he must needs run over all this plain, and go bare-footed till he reached the

end; whereat he saw a burning furnace that he needs must enter in. And the brother having crossed over all that plain with grievous agony and pains, the angel said: "Enter into yon furnace, for so thou needs must do." And he answered: "Ah me! how cruel a guide thou art! for thou seest that I be nigh unto death by reason of the torments of this plain, and now to rest me thou biddest me enter within this burning furnace." And as he looked, he saw within the furnace many devils with forks of iron in their hands, with the which, sith he was slow to enter, they thrust him in it suddenly. When that he was come into the furnace, looking round he beheld his godfather, all on fire: and he questioned him: "O hapless godfather, how camest thou hither?" And he replied: "Go on yet a little further and thou wilt find my wife, thy godmother, who will tell thee the reason of our damnation." The brother going on a little further, behold! there appeared unto him the godmother aforesaid, all in flames, shut up in a corn-measure all on fire: and he asked her: "O hapless and unhappy godmother, wherefore hast thou come into such cruel torment?" And she replied: "Because at the time of the great famine that Saint Francis predicted aforetime, my husband and I falsified the measures of the corn and grain that we sold; and therefore I burn fast bound within this measure." Having said these words, the angel that led the brother thrust him without the furnace, and then bespake him: "Make thyself

The Brother's vision

The fearful journey

ready for to take a fearful journey on the which thou needs must go." And he, lamenting, said: "O cruel guide, that hast no whit compassion on me! thou dost see that I have been well-nigh burnt up in this furnace, and still thou dost wish to lead me on a parlous journey and fearful"; thereat the angel touched him, and made him strong and whole. Anon he led him to a bridge, which might not be crossed without great peril; for it was exceeding narrow and slender, and very slippery, and had no rail withal; and below flowed a river terrible to see, full of serpents, and dragons, and scorpions, and it sent forth a stench exceeding great; and the angel said unto him: "Pass over this bridge, for assuredly thou needs must cross." He made answer: "And how can I cross it, that I fall not in this parlous stream?" Quoth the angel: "Walk thou behind me, and set thy foot where thou shalt see that I set mine, and so shalt thou safely cross over." So the brother crossed over behind the angel, as he had instructed him, until he came to the middle of the bridge; and as he was thus in the middle of the bridge, the angel flew away: and departing from him, went to the top of a very high mountain, far off on the other side of the bridge; and the brother marked well the place whither the angel had flown; but left behind without a guide, and looking down below, he saw those beasts so terrible standing with their heads above the water and with open mouths, ready to devour him should he fall; and he was in such fear

that he nowise knew what to do nor what to say; for neither could he turn back nor go forward. Wherefore seeing himself in so great tribulation, and that he had no refuge save in God, he bowed himself down, and clasped the bridge tight, and weeping committed himself to God with all his heart, that of His most holy mercy He would succour him. And done the prayer he seemed to begin to put forth wings; whereat with great joy he waited that they should grow, so that he might fly from off the bridge to the place where the angel had flown. But after some time, through the great desire he had to cross the bridge, he set himself to fly; but because the wings had not yet grown enough, he fell down on the bridge and the feathers dropped off: wherefore he clung again to the bridge, and, as at the first, committed himself to God; and done the prayer, again he seemed to put forth wings; but, as at the first, he did not wait till they were perfectly grown: so that, setting himself to fly before the time, he fell back again upon the bridge and the feathers dropped off. Wherefore seeing that he fell for the haste that he had to fly before the time, he began to say thus within himself: "Of a surety, if I shall put forth wings yet the third time, I will wait until such time as they have grown so large that I may fly without falling down again." And while he pondered these thoughts, he saw that for the third time he was putting forth wings: and waiting a long time until they were well grown, it seemed to him that what with the

The crossing of the bridge

The marvellous palace

first and the second and the third putting forth of wings, he had waited full a hundred and fifty years or more. At the last he rose up the third time, and with all his force he took his flight and flew up, even to the place whither the angel had flown; and as he knocked at the door of the palace where the angel lay, the porter asked him: "Who art thou that comest here?" He answered: "I am a brother minor." Quoth the porter: "Wait here a while, for I wish to bring Saint Francis, for to see if he know thee." As he went in quest of Saint Francis, the brother began to gaze on the marvellous walls of that palace: and lo! the walls appeared transparent and of such clearness that he plainly saw the choirs of saints and all that passed within. And as he gazed upon this sight in deep amaze, behold! Saint Francis came, and Brother Bernard, and Brother Giles; and after them so great a multitude of saints and holy women that had followed his ensample, that they seemed well-nigh without number, and having won there, Saint Francis said to the porter: "Let him enter in, for he is one of my brothers." And as soon as he had entered, he felt such consolation and such sweetness, that straightway he forgot all the tribulations he had borne, as though they ne'er had been. And then Saint Francis, leading him within, showed unto him many marvellous things, and thereafter said unto him: "My son, thou must needs return unto the world again, and abide therein seven days, in the which do thou diligently make thee ready

with great devotion; for, after these seven days, I shall come for thee, and then shalt thou come with me unto this place of the blessed." Now Saint Francis was arrayed in a marvellous robe, adorned with stars most beautiful: and his five stigmata were like five stars, exceeding beautiful, and of so great splendour that they lit up all the palace with their rays. And Brother Bernard had on his head a crown of stars most beautiful; and Brother Giles was adorned with a marvellous light; and many other holy brothers did he recognise among them, whom in the world he had never seen. Then taking leave of Saint Francis, he returned, albeit unwillingly, to the earth again. And when he awoke, returning to himself and coming to his senses again, the brothers were ringing for Prime: so that he had not continued in that vision save from Matins until Prime, albeit it seemed to him he had continued many years. And having recounted to his guardian all this vision in order, within the seven days he began to fall sick of a fever; and on the eighth day Saint Francis came for him, according to his promise, with a great multitude of glorious saints, and conducted his soul unto the Kingdom of the Blessed, to life eternal.

The home of the blessed

Chapter XXVII

How Saint Francis converted in Bologna two scholars, who became brothers; and how thereafter he delivered one of them from a sore temptation

St Francis at Bologna

SAINT FRANCIS coming on a time to the city of Bologna, all the people of the city ran together to see him; and so great was the press that scarce with great difficulty could the people reach the square; and the square being all full of men and of women and of scholars, Saint Francis stood high up in the midst of them, and began to preach whatsoever the Holy Spirit taught him; and preached so marvellously that it seemed rather that an angel was preaching than a man: and his celestial words appeared even as sharp arrows piercing the hearts of them that heard him in such sort, that in that preaching a great multitude of men and women were converted into penitence. Among the which were two students, nobly born, from the March of Ancona; and the one was named Pellegrino, and the other Rinieri: the which twain by divine inspiration touched in the heart through the said preaching, came to Saint Francis, saying that they wished wholly to abandon the world and be of the number of his brethren. Then Saint Francis, knowing by revelation that they were sent of God, and that in the Order they would lead a holy life, and noting their great fervour, received them joyfully, saying: "Do

thou, Pellegrino, live in the Order the life of humility, and thou, Brother Rinieri, serve the brethren"; and even so it was; for Brother Pellegrino wished not to live as a priest but as a lay brother, albeit he was a great scholar and right learned in the canon law; through the which humility he attained unto such great perfection of virtue, that Brother Bernard, the first-born of Saint Francis, said of him that he was one of the most perfect brothers in the world. And at the last, the said Brother Pellegrino, full of virtue, passed from this miserable life unto the life of the blessed, and wrought many miracles before his death and thereafter. And the said Brother Rinieri devoutly and faithfully served the brethren, dwelling in great sanctity and humility: and he became Saint Francis' close familiar friend. Being afterwards made minister of the Province of the March of Ancona, he ruled it for a long time with the utmost peace and discretion. A while after, God suffered a very grievous temptation to arise within his soul: and he being in anguish and tribulation thereby, afflicted himself with fasts, with scourgings, with tears and prayers, both day and night: but for all that he could not rid him of that temptation; but oftentimes abode in great despair, sith he deemed himself thereby abandoned of God. While he was in such despair, as a last remedy he minded to go to Saint Francis, thinking thus within himself: "If Saint Francis will look kindly on me, and show himself mine own familiar friend, as is his wont, I believe that God will yet have pity

Brother Rinieri's temptation

St Francis comforts him

on me: but if not, it will be a sign that I shall be abandoned by God." So he set out and came to Saint Francis, who at that time lay grievously sick in the palace of the bishop of Assisi; and God revealed unto him all the manner of the temptation and the despair of the said Brother Rinieri, and of his purpose and his coming. And straightway Saint Francis called Brother Leo and Brother Masseo, and said unto them: "Go ye out at once to meet my little son, most dear to me, brother Rinieri, and embrace him on my behalf and salute him, and tell him that among all the brothers that are in the world I love him with especial love." So they went, and found Brother Rinieri on the way, and embraced him, saying unto him whatsoever Saint Francis had bidden them say. Whereby such consolation and sweetness filled his soul that he was as one beside himself: and giving thanks to God with all his heart, he went on and came to the place where Saint Francis lay sick. And albeit Saint Francis was grievously sick, yet when he heard that Brother Rinieri was coming, he got up and went to meet him, and embraced him very sweetly, and said: "My little son, most dear to me, Brother Rinieri, among all the brothers that are in the world, I love thee, I love thee with especial love." And this said, he made the sign of the most holy cross upon his brow, and kissed him thereon; and bespake him again: "My little son, most dear, God hath suffered this temptation to assail thee for thy great gain in merit, but if thou no more desire

this gain, then let it be." O marvel! as soon as Saint Francis had said these words, incontinent departed from him all temptation, as though in all his life he had felt it not a whit, and he remained altogether comforted. Brother Bernard's ecstasy

Chapter XXVIII

Of an ecstasy that came to Brother Bernard; whereby he abode from morning until Nones, so that of himself he was not ware

WHAT great favour God oftentimes bestowed on the poor followers of the Gospel, who left the world for the love of Christ, is shown forth in Brother Bernard of Quintavalle, who, after he had taken the habit of Saint Francis, was very often rapt in God through contemplation of heavenly things. Among others it befell that on a time, while he was in church for to hear the Mass, with his whole mind uplifted unto God, he became so rapt and so absorbed in God that, when the Body of Christ was elevated, he saw nothing at all, nor kneeled him down, nor drew back his hood, as the others did; but without movement of his eyes, with gaze fast fixed, he stood from morning until Nones, not heeding aught; and after Nones returning to himself again, he went through the House crying with a voice of glad surprise: "O brothers! O brothers! O brothers! there is no man in this land so great or so nobly born who, if there were promised to him a beauteous palace full of gold, would not gladly carry a sackful of dung

His abstinence

for to gain so noble a treasure." Unto this heavenly treasure, promised unto them that love God, the said Brother Bernard had his mind so uplifted, that for fifteen years continuously he went always with his mind and his face upraised to heaven; in the which time he never stayed his hunger at the table, though he ate of that which was set before him, a little: for he said that none could practise perfect abstinence from that whereof he did not taste, but true abstinence is the being temperate in those things that taste pleasant to the mouth; and thereby did he attain unto such brightness and light of intelligence, that even the great clerics had recourse unto him for the resolving of deep questions and interpreting of difficult passages of the Scripture; and he dissolved every doubt for them. And because his mind was wholly free and abstracted from the things of earth, he, like the swallows, flew high up through contemplation: wherefore at one time for twenty days, at another time for thirty days, he remained alone on the tops of the highest mountains, contemplating heavenly things. For the which cause Brother Giles said of him that unto no other men had been given this gift that was given to Brother Bernard of Quintavalle; to wit, that he fed flying like the swallows: and for this excellent grace that he received of God, Saint Francis right willingly spake with him oftentimes by day and night: whereby were they sometimes found together rapt in God the whole night long in the wood, wherein they twain had met to speak of God together.

Chapter XXIX

How the devil appeared many times unto Brother Ruffino in the form of the Crucified, telling him that all the good he did was lost, since he was not among those elect to life eternal. Whereof Saint Francis was ware through revelation from God, and made Brother Ruffino to know his error in lending credence thereto.

Brother Ruffino's temptation

BROTHER RUFFINO, one of the most noble citizens of Assisi and a companion of Saint Francis, a man of great sanctity, was on a time most grievously assailed and tempted in his soul, in respect of predestination; whereby he became altogether melancholy and sad; for the devil put it into his heart that he was damned and was not of those predestined to eternal life; and that all that he did in the Order was lost. And this temptation continuing day by day, he for shame told it not to Saint Francis, yet ceased not to observe the wonted prayers and fasts: wherefore the enemy began to heap on him sorrow upon sorrow, over and above the battle within, assaulting him also from without with lying apparitions. Wherefore on a time he appeared to him in the form of the Crucified, and said to him: "O Brother Ruffino, why dost thou afflict thyself in penance and in prayer, seeing that thou art not among those predestined to eternal life? and believe me that I know whom I have elected and predestined, and believe not the son of Peter Bernardoni, if he tell thee the contrary, nor ques-

St Francis and Brother Ruffino

tion him concerning this matter, for neither he nor others know, save I alone, who am the Son of God: wherefore believe me of a surety that thou art of the number of the damned: and the son of Peter Bernardoni, thy Father, and also his father are damned, and whoso follows him is led astray." And said these words, Brother Ruffino began to be so overshadowed by the prince of darkness that he lost all the faith and love he had had for Saint Francis, and took no care to tell him aught thereof. But that which Brother Ruffino did not tell the holy father, the Holy Spirit revealed to him: wherefore Saint Francis, seeing in spirit the great danger of the said brother, sent Brother Masseo to call him; whom Brother Ruffino answered chidingly: "What have I to do with Brother Francis?" Then Brother Masseo, all filled with divine wisdom, perceiving the deception of the devil, said: "O Brother Ruffino, knowest thou not that Brother Francis is as an angel of God, who hath enlightened so many souls in the world, and through whom we have received the grace of God? wherefore I will that thou by all means come with me to him; for I clearly see that thou art deceived by the devil." And this said, Brother Ruffino arose and went to Saint Francis, and Saint Francis seeing him coming from afar off, began to cry out: "O thou miserable Brother Ruffino, in whom hast thou believed?" And when Brother Ruffino was come up to him, Saint Francis recounted to him in order all the temptation that he had had of the devil within and without, and

showed him clearly that what had appeared to him was the devil and not Christ, and that he ought in no wise to consent unto his promptings: "But when the devil should say to thee again: 'Thou art damned,' do thou answer: 'Open thy mouth, for I fain would void on thee,' and this shall be to thee the sign that he is the devil and not Christ; for as soon as thou shalt give him this answer, he will flee away incontinent. Moreover by this token shouldst thou have known that he was the devil and not Christ, in that he hardened thy heart to all goodness, the which thing is his own proper office; but Christ, the blessed One, never hardeneth the heart of the faithful, nay, rather he softeneth it, as he saith by the mouth of the prophet: 'I will take away the stony heart and I will give you a heart of flesh.'" Then Brother Ruffino, seeing that Saint Francis told him in order all the manner of his temptation, touched to the heart by his words, began to weep bitterly, and fell down before Saint Francis and humbly confessed his fault in having kept his temptation hidden. And thus he abode altogether consoled and comforted by the admonishments of the holy father, and wholly changed for the better. Then at the last Saint Francis said unto him: "Go, my little son, and shrive thee, and relax not the zeal of thy wonted prayers: and know of a surety that this temptation will bring to thee great profit and consolation, and very shortly shalt thou prove it." So Brother Ruffino returned to his cell in the wood, and continuing in prayer with many

St Francis counsels him

Ruffino's deliverance

tears, behold! the enemy came to him in the form of Christ, as to outward semblance, and said to him: "O Brother Ruffino, have I not told thee that thou shouldest not believe the son of Peter Bernardoni, nor shouldest weary thyself in tears and prayers, seeing that thou art damned? What doth it profit thee to afflict thyself while yet alive, and then when thou shalt die thou wilt be damned?" And straightway Brother Ruffino made answer to the devil: "Open thy mouth, for I fain would void on thee." Whereat the devil being exceeding wroth, gat him away incontinent with so furious a tempest and shaking of the rocks of Mount Subassio, which was hard by, that the loud noise of the rocks that fell down lasted a great while; and so furiously did they strike the one against the other as they rolled down, that the valley was lit up with horrible flashes of fire: and at the terrible din that they made, Saint Francis and his companions came out of the House, in great amazement, for to see what strange thing had befallen; and still to this day is seen that exceeding great ruin of rocks. Then Brother Ruffino knew of a surety that it had been the devil that had deceived him. And going back to Saint Francis, he threw himself again upon the ground, and confessed his fault; and Saint Francis comforted him with sweet words, and sent him back full of consolation to his cell, wherein as he was most devoutly praying, there appeared to him Christ, the blessed One, and rekindled all his soul with love divine, and said: "Thou hast done well, my son, to

believe in Saint Francis, for he that made thee sad was the devil: but I am Christ thy Master; and to make thee sure thereof, I give thee this sign: Whilst thou dost live, thou shalt no more feel sadness nor melancholy." And this said, Christ departed, leaving him in such gladness and sweetness of spirit and uplifting of the mind, that day and night he was absorbed and rapt in God. And from that time forth he was so strengthened in grace and in certainty of his salvation, that he became altogether changed into another man; and would have continued day and night in prayer and in contemplation of the things of God, if the others had suffered him. Wherefore Saint Francis said of him: that Brother Ruffino was in this life canonised by Christ, and that, save in his presence, he would not doubt to call him Saint Ruffino, albeit he was still alive on earth. His sanctity

Chapter XXX

Of the beautiful sermon preached in Assisi by Saint Francis and Brother Ruffino

THE aforesaid Brother Ruffino, through continual contemplation, was so absorbed in God, that he became as it were insensible and dumb, spake but seldom, and therewithal had neither the gift of preaching, nor boldness nor eloquence therein; nevertheless Saint Francis on a time bade him go to Assisi and preach to the people whatsoever God might inspire him withal. Wherefore Brother Ruffino answered: "Reverend father, I pray thee pardon me and

Ruffino preaches at Assisi

send me not; for, as thou wottest, I have not the gift of preaching, but am simple and ignorant." Then quoth Saint Francis: "Seeing that thou hast not obeyed incontinent, I command thee by holy obedience that thou get thee to Assisi naked as thou wast born, save in thy breeches only, and enter into a church and preach unto the people." At this command, the said Brother Ruffino stripped himself and went to Assisi and entered into a church, and having done reverence to the altar went up into the pulpit and began to preach; for the which cause the children and the men began to laugh, and said: "Now look you how these fellows do so much penance that they become fools and are beside themselves." Meantime, Saint Francis, bethinking him of the ready obedience of Brother Ruffino, the which was one of the most noble gentles of Assisi, and of the hard commandment he had laid upon him, began to chide himself, saying: "Whence comes to thee such boldness, thou son of Peter Bernardoni, vile wretch, to command Brother Ruffino, that is one of the most noble gentles of Assisi, to go and preach to the people like a madman? By God, thou shalt have proof in thine own self of what thou biddest others do." And straightway in fervour of spirit he stripped himself in like fashion, and set out for Assisi, and took with him Brother Leo to carry his habit and that of Brother Ruffino. And the folk of Assisi beholding him in the self-same guise, made mock of him, deeming that he and Brother Ruffino had grown mad

through overmuch penance. Saint Francis entered into the church where Brother Ruffino was preaching these words: "Dearly beloved, flee from the world and put away sin; render to others their due, if ye would escape from hell; follow the commandments of God, in loving God and your neighbour, if ye would go to heaven; do penance, if ye would possess the kingdom of heaven." Then Saint Francis went up into the pulpit, and began to preach so marvellously of the contempt of the world, of holy penitence, of voluntary poverty, and of the desire of the kingdom of heaven, and of the nakedness and shame of the passion of our Lord Jesu Christ, that all they that heard the preaching, men and women in great multitude, began to weep most bitterly with devout and contrite hearts; and not there alone, but in all Assisi was there that day such weeping for the passion of Christ, that never had there been the like. And the people being thuswise edified and comforted by this act of Saint Francis and Brother Ruffino, Saint Francis re-clad Brother Ruffino and himself; and so re-clad, they returned to the House of Portiuncula, praising and glorifying God, that had given them grace to overcome themselves, by the contempt of themselves, and to edify the little sheep of Christ by good example, and to show how greatly the world is to be despised. And on that day so much did the devotion of the people towards them increase, that he deemed himself blessed whoso could touch the hem of their garment.

St Francis preaches a wonderful sermon

Chapter XXXI

How Saint Francis knew the secrets of the consciences of all his brothers in order

The three most holy souls

EVEN as our Lord Jesu Christ says in the Gospel: "I know my sheep, and am known of mine"; even so the blessed father Saint Francis, like a good shepherd, knew by divine revelation all the merits and the virtues of his companions, and in like manner their faults also. For the which cause he knew how to provide the best remedy for each, to wit, humbling the proud, and exalting the humble; reproving vice, and praising virtue; even as we read in the wondrous revelations that he had concerning his first family. Among the which we find that on a time when Saint Francis was with the said family in a certain House discoursing of God, Brother Ruffino not being with them during this discourse but wrapt in contemplation in the wood; while they continued thus to discourse of God, behold Brother Ruffino came from out the wood and passed by at a stone's throw from them. Then Saint Francis, beholding him, turned to his companions, and asked them, saying: "Whom think ye to be the holiest soul God hath in the world?" And they answering him, said that they thought it was his own; and Saint Francis said unto them: "My brothers most dear to me, I am of myself the most unworthy and vile wretch that God hath in this world, but mark ye Brother Ruffino yonder, that hath now come from out

the wood? God hath revealed it unto me that his soul is one of the three most holy souls in all the world: and in very sooth I tell you that I doubt not to call him Saint Ruffino in his lifetime, sith his soul is so strengthened in grace, and sanctified and canonised in heaven, by our Lord Jesu Christ"; but these words Saint Francis never spake in the presence of the said Brother Ruffino. In like manner, how Saint Francis knew the faults of his brothers, is clearly seen in the case of Brother Elias, whom he ofttimes reproved for his pride; and of Brother John of the Chapel, to whom he foretold that he would hang himself by the throat; and of that brother, whom the devil held fast by the throat when he was chid for disobedience: and of many other brothers, whose secret faults and virtues he clearly knew through the revelation of Christ. "Saint" Ruffino

Chapter XXXII

How Brother Masseo obtained of Christ the virtue of his humility

THE first companions of Saint Francis strove with all their might to be poor in the things of the world and rich in virtues, through the which men attain unto the true riches that are heavenly and eternal. It befell on a day that being gathered together to speak of God, one among them related this example: There was a man that was a dear friend of God, and had great grace in the active and contemplative life, and therewithal had such exceeding deep humility

Masseo gains his desire

that he deemed himself the greatest of sinners: the which humility did sanctify him and strengthen him in grace, and made him continually to grow in virtue and in the gifts of God, and suffered him never to fall into sin. Now Brother Masseo hearing such marvellous things touching humility, and knowing full well that it was a treasure of eternal life, began to be so inflamed with love and desire for this virtue of humility, that with great fervour lifting up his face to heaven, he made a vow and firm resolve never to be joyful in this world again, until such time as he should feel this virtue in his soul in all perfectness; and from thenceforward he abode well-nigh continuously shut up within his cell, mortifying his body with fasts, and vigils, and prayers, and weeping exceedingly before God, for to obtain of Him this virtue, without the which he deemed him worthy of hell, and wherewith that friend of God, of whom he had heard, had been so richly dowered. And as Brother Masseo continued for many days in this desire, it befell on a day that he went into the wood, and in fervour of spirit passed through it with tears and cries and sighing, calling with fervent desire on God for this heavenly virtue; and for that God gladly heareth the prayers of humble contrite souls, while Brother Masseo was in this case, there came a voice from heaven that called him twice: "Brother Masseo, Brother Masseo." And he knowing in spirit that it was the voice of Christ, answered: "Speak, Lord." And Christ said unto him: "What wouldest thou give, for to

gain the grace thou askest for?" Replied Brother Masseo: "Lord, I would give the eyes of my head." And Christ said unto him: "And it is My will that thou have the grace and thine eyes also." And this said, the voice ceased, and Brother Masseo remained so filled with the grace of the virtue of humility he had longed for, and of the light of God, that from thenceforward he was always joyful and glad; and oft-times, when he prayed, he would break forth into sounds of joy, cooing like a dove, U U U; and he abode thus in contemplation with a cheerful countenance and a merry heart; and therewithal, having become exceeding humble, he deemed himself the least of all men upon earth. When Brother Jacques of Fallerone asked him why in his song of joy he never changed his note, he blithely answered him, that when one thing brings us full content, there is no need to change the note.

St Clare and the Pope

Chapter XXXIII

How Saint Clare, at the bidding of the Pope, blessed the bread that was on the table: so that on every loaf appeared the sign of the holy Cross

SAINT CLARE, the most devout disciple of the Cross of Christ and noble plant of Saint Francis, was of such sanctity, that not only the bishops and the cardinals, but the pope likewise ardently desired to see and hear her, and oft-times visited her in person. Among other

St Clare blesses the bread

times, the holy Father came on a time to her convent to hear her speak of things celestial and divine; and as they thus discoursed together on diverse matters, Saint Clare in the meantime let make ready the tables, and set the bread thereon, that the holy Father might bless it. So when their spiritual discourse was ended, Saint Clare kneeling down with great reverence, besought him that he would be pleased to bless the bread set on the table. Replied the holy Father: "Sister Clare, most true and faithful, I desire that thou bless this bread and make thereon the sign of the most holy Cross of Christ, to whom thou hast wholly given thyself." Quoth Saint Clare: "Most holy Father, pardon me, seeing that I should be deserving of much blame, if I, that am a poor, vile woman, should take on me to give this blessing, before the Vicar of Christ." And the Pope replied: "To the end that this may not be imputed to presumption but to the merit of obedience, I command thee by holy obedience that thou make the sign of the most holy Cross on this bread, and bless it in the name of God." Then Saint Clare, like a true daughter of obedience, most devoutly blessed those loaves with the sign of the most holy Cross. O marvel! incontinent on all those loaves appeared the sign of the Cross impressed most fair to see: then of those loaves, part were eaten, and part for the miracle's sake were put aside. And the holy Father, when he had beheld the miracle, took of the said bread, and giving thanks to God, departed, leaving Saint Clare with his blessing.

Now at that time there dwelt in the convent Sister Ortolana, the mother of Saint Clare, and Sister Agnes, her sister, they twain together with Saint Clare, full of virtue and of the Holy Spirit, and many other holy nuns; to whom Saint Francis sent many sick persons; and they by their prayers and the sign of the most holy Cross restored them all to health. The miracle of the loaves

Chapter XXXIV

How Saint Louis, King of France, went in person, in the guise of a pilgrim, to Perugia for to visit the holy Brother Giles

SAINT LOUIS, King of France, went on a pilgrimage to visit the holy places throughout the world; and hearing the exceeding great fame of the sanctity of Brother Giles, the which had been among the first companions of Saint Francis, he set it in his heart and was fully purposed to visit him in person; for the which cause he came unto Perugia, where in those days the said Brother Giles dwelt. And coming up to the door of the House of the brothers, like a poor pilgrim and unknown, with few companions, he asked with great earnestness for Brother Giles, without telling the porter who it was that asked. So the porter went to Brother Giles and told him that at the door was a pilgrim that asked for him: and being inspired of God, it was revealed to him that it was the King of France: so straightway with great fervour he left his cell and ran to the door; and without further ques-

King Louis and Brother Giles

tioning, albeit they ne'er before had seen each other, kneeling down with great devotion they embraced and kissed each other, with such signs of tender love as though for long time they had been close, familiar friends: but for all that, they spoke not, nor the one nor the other, but continued in this embrace, with these signs of love and tenderness, in silence. And whenas they had a long time continued together in the manner set forth above without having spoken together, they parted the one from the other, and Saint Louis went his way on his journey, and Brother Giles returned unto his cell. When the king was gone, a certain brother asked one of his companions who it was that had embraced Brother Giles for so long time; and he replied that it was Louis, King of France, the which had come for to see Brother Giles. When this he told to the other brothers, they were exceeding sorrowful for that Brother Giles had spoken never a word to him: and murmuring thereat, they said to him: "O Brother Giles, why hast thou shown thee so discourteous as to say naught at all to so holy a king that had come from France to see thee and hear from thy lips good words." Replied Brother Giles: "Dear brothers, marvel not thereat, for neither I to him nor he to me could speak a word; sith so soon as we embraced each other, the light of heavenly wisdom revealed and showed to me his heart, and mine to him, and thus through divine working, each looking on the other's heart, we knew what I would say to him and he to me, far better than if we had

spoken with our mouths, and with more consolation than if we had sought to show forth in words the feelings of our hearts. Through the weakness of human speech, that cannot express clearly the secret mysteries of God, it would have left us all disconsolate rather than consoled; wherefore know ye that the king departed from me with marvellous content and consolation in his soul."

St Clare miraculously hears Mass

Chapter XXXV

How Saint Clare, being sick, was miraculously carried, on the night of Christmas Eve, to the church of Saint Francis and there heard the office

IT befell on a time that Saint Clare was grievously sick, so that she could not go at all to say the office in church with the other nuns; when the feast of the Nativity of Christ came round, all the others went to Matins: but she remained in her bed ill-content, for that she could not go with the others and partake of that spiritual consolation. But Jesu Christ, her spouse, desiring not to leave her thus disconsolate, caused her to be miraculously carried to the church of Saint Francis and to be present at the whole of the office of Matins and the midnight Mass, and beyond all this to receive the Holy Communion and then be carried back to her bed. When the nuns came back to Saint Clare, after the office in Saint Damian's was over, they said to her: "O our mother, Sister Clare, what sweet consolation have we had on this holy feast

Brother Leo's dream

of the Nativity! oh, would that it had pleased God that you had been with us there!" And Saint Clare replied: "Praise and glory do I give unto our Lord Jesu Christ, the blessed One, my sisters and daughters most dear; for that with much consolation to my soul I have had part in all the solemn rites of this most holy night, and even more than ye: sith through the loving care of my father, Saint Francis, and the grace of our Lord Jesu Christ, I have been present in the church of my venerable father, Saint Francis, and with the ears of my body and my mind have heard all the office and the sound of the organs that be there; and in the same place have taken the most holy Communion. Wherefore for such grace bestowed upon me rejoice and give thanks to our Lord Jesu Christ.

Chapter XXXVI

How Saint Francis set forth unto Brother Leo a fair dream that he had seen

IT befell on a time that Saint Francis was grievously sick and Brother Leo did him service; the said Brother Leo, whilst praying close to Saint Francis, was rapt in ecstasy, and borne in spirit to a mighty river, broad and rushing furiously. And as he stood there for to see who crossed over it, he beheld certain brothers enter into the river, with loads upon their backs; the which were straightway thrown down by the force of the stream and were drowned; but certain others went as far as a third of the way over;

others, as far as the middle of the stream; some nearly to the other bank; but in the end they all fell down and were drowned. Seeing this, Brother Leo had exceeding great compassion on them: and meanwhile lo! there came suddenly a great multitude of brothers that had on their backs no load or burden of any kind and the light of holy poverty shone upon them; and they entered into the stream and passed over without any peril; and when he had seen this, Brother Leo came back to himself again. Then Saint Francis perceiving in spirit that Brother Leo had seen a vision, called him unto him and questioned him concerning what he had seen: and whenas Brother Leo had told him all the vision in order, quoth Saint Francis: "That which thou hast seen is true. The great river is this world; the brothers that were drowned in the river are they that remained not true to their profession of the gospel life, and chief above all to that of the deepest poverty; but they that without peril passed over are those brothers that neither seek nor possess in this world aught that is earthly or carnal, but being temperate in clothing and in food, are content therewith, following Christ naked upon the cross; and with gladness and right good will do they bear the burden and sweet yoke of Christ and of most holy obedience; wherefore they pass with ease from this temporal life to life eternal.

The interpretation of the dream

Chapter XXXVII

How Jesu Christ, the blessed One, at the prayer of St Francis, let convert a rich and gentle knight and become a brother, the which had shewn great honour and liberality unto Saint Francis

St Francis and the knight

SAINT FRANCIS, the servant of Christ, coming late one evening to the house of a great gentleman and powerful, was received of him to lodge therein, both he and his companion, as if they were angels of God, with exceeding great courtesy and devotion: for the which cause Saint Francis was greatly touched with love for him, bethinking him how at their coming into the house he had embraced and kissed them lovingly, and then had washed their feet and wiped and humbly kissed them, and had kindled a great fire and made ready the table with much good food, and whilst they ate, he served them always with a joyful countenance. Now, when that Saint Francis and his companion had eaten, this gentle man said: "Behold, my father, I offer to thee myself and all my goods; so oft as ye have need of tunic or mantle or aught beside, buy them and I will pay for them; and behold, I am ready to provide your every need, since by the grace of God am I able, seeing that I abound in all temporal goods; and therefore, for the love of God, that hath given them me, I do good unto His poor right willingly." Whereby Saint Francis, seeing in him such gentle courtesy and friendliness, and so

liberal an offering, conceived in his heart such love towards him, that departing thence he said to his companion on the way: "Of a truth this courteous gentleman would be good for our order and our company, the which is so grateful and bounden unto God, and so loving and courteous to his neighbour and the poor. Know, dear brother, that courtesy is one of the qualities of God Himself, who, of His courtesy, giveth His sun and His rain to the just and the unjust: and courtesy is the sister of charity, the which quencheth hate and keepeth love alive. Because I have seen such divine virtue in this good man, fain would I have him as my companion; and therefore I desire that one day we return to him again, if perchance God may have touched his heart to desire to go about with us in the service of God; and in this mean time let us pray to God to put this desire within his heart, and give him grace to bring the same to good effect." O wondrous thing! a few days after that Saint Francis had made this prayer, God put this desire into the heart of that gentleman: and quoth Saint Francis to his companion: "Let us go, my brother, to the house of that courteous gentleman; for that I have sure hope in God that with the same courtesy as he hath in temporal things he will give himself up to us and will become our companion"; so they gat them on their way. And when they drew near unto his house, Saint Francis said to his companion: "Wait here for me a little while, for I fain would first pray to God that He may prosper

Courtesy the sister of Charity

Christ appears to St Francis

our journey; that Jesu Christ may be pleased to grant us, weak and poor though we be, the noble prey that we mind to snatch from the world, through the virtue of His most holy passion." And this said, he set himself to pray in a place where he could be seen by the said courteous gentleman; whereby, sith it was the will of God, as he was looking hither and thither, he beheld Saint Francis praying most devoutly before Christ, who with a great brightness appeared to him in the aforesaid prayer and stood before him; and the while he saw Saint Francis for some good space uplifted bodily from off the earth. For the which cause he was so touched and inspired of God to leave the world, that incontinent he came forth out of his palace and ran towards Saint Francis! and coming up to him as he was at prayer, he kneeled down at his feet, and with exceeding great fervour and devotion besought him that it would please him to receive him and to do penance together with him. Then Saint Francis, seeing his prayer was heard of God, and that that which he himself desired, this gentle man was begging for most earnestly, lifted him up, and in fervour and gladness of spirit embraced and kissed him, devoutly giving thanks to God, who had added so worthy a knight unto his company. And quoth that gentle man to Saint Francis: "What dost thou bid me do, my Father? Lo! I am ready to do thy bidding and give to the poor whatsoever I possess, and thus disburthened of all temporal things, to follow Christ with thee."

And even so he did, according to the counsel of Saint Francis, distributing all that he had to the poor, and entered into the Order, and lived in great penitence and holiness of life and upright conversation. St Francis and Brother Elias

Chapter XXXVIII

How Saint Francis knew in spirit that Brother Elias was damned, and would die outside the Order; wherefore at the supplication of Brother Elias, he prayed to Christ for him, and his prayer was heard

IT befell on a time while Saint Francis and Brother Elias were dwelling together in the same House, that it was revealed of God unto Saint Francis that Brother Elias was damned and would fall away from the Order, and in the end die outside the Order. For the which cause Saint Francis took so strong a displeasure against him that he nor spake nor held converse with him; and if at any time it befell that Brother Elias came towards him, he would turn aside and go another way, so that he might not meet him; wherefore Brother Elias began to see and to understand that Saint Francis was displeased with him: so, desiring to know the reason thereof, he drew near to Saint Francis for to speak with him, and when Saint Francis sought to shun Brother Elias, in courteous wise he detained him by force, and began with modesty to pray him to be pleased to show to him the reason for the which he thuswise shunned his company and

St Francis' intercession

to have speech with him. And Saint Francis answered him: "The reason is this; since it hath been revealed to me by God that thou for thy sins wilt fall away from the Order and die outside the Order, and also hath God revealed to me that thou art damned." Hearing this, Brother Elias spake thus to him: "My reverend father, I pray thee for the love of Jesu Christ that thou shun me not on this account nor drive me from thee, but like a good shepherd, following the example of Christ, seek out the sheep that needs must perish if thou help it not, and take it to thyself again; and pray unto God for me, that, if it be possible, He may revoke the sentence of my damnation; for it is written that God lets change the sentence, if the sinner amends his sin: and I have so great faith in thy prayers that, were I in the midst of hell and thou wert to pray to God for me, I should feel some sweet relief; wherefore again I pray thee to commend me, poor sinner, unto God, who came into the world to save sinners, that He may receive me into His mercy." And this did Brother Elias speak with much devotion and tears: so that Saint Francis, like a pitying father, promised him to pray to God for him, and even so he did. And as with exceeding great devotion he prayed to God for him, he learned by revelation that his prayer was heard of God, as touching the sentence of damnation on Brother Elias, so that at the last his soul would not be damned; but that of a surety he would leave the Order, and outside the Order he would die; and even

so it came to pass. For Frederick, King of Sicily, having rebelled against the Church and being excommunicated by the Pope (both he and whoso gave him aid and counsel),—the said Brother Elias, the which was accounted one of the most learned men in the world, being called by the said King Frederick, joined himself unto him, and became a rebel against the Church and an apostate from the Order: for the which cause was he excommunicated by the Pope and the habit of Saint Francis taken from him. And while he thus was excommunicate and grievously sick, one of his brethren, a lay brother, the which had remained within the Order and was a man of good and virtuous life, hearing of his sickness, came to visit him, and among other things bespake him thus: "My brother, most dear, much doth it grieve me that thou art excommunicate and outcast from thine Order, and that thuswise thou shouldest die: but if thou dost see or way or manner by the which I may pluck thee out of this peril, right gladly would I take all manner of pains for thee." Replied Brother Elias: "My brother, I see no other way save that thou get thee to the Pope, and pray him for the love of God and of Saint Francis, His servant, through whose admonishments I left the world, to absolve me from his excommunication, and give back to me again the habit of Religion." Then said that brother that right gladly would he do his best endeavours for his salvation: and departing from him, he gat him to the feet of the holy Pope, humbly beseeching him to pardon his

Brother Elias excommunicated

Brother Elias absolved

brother, for the love of Christ and of Saint Francis, His servant. And sith it was God's good pleasure, the Pope granted him leave to go back again, and if he found Brother Elias alive, absolve him, in his name, from the excommunication and give the habit back to him again. Wherefore he set out right joyously, and in great haste returned to Brother Elias, and found him still alive, but well-nigh at the point of death, and so he absolved him from the excommunication; and putting on the habit again, Brother Elias passed from out this life, and his soul was saved through the merits of Saint Francis and through his prayer, in the which Brother Elias had set such lively hope.

Chapter XXXIX

Of the marvellous sermon that the Brother Minor, Saint Antony of Padua, preached in the consistory

THAT marvellous vessel of the Holy Spirit, Saint Antony of Padua, one of the chosen disciples and the companion of Saint Francis, whom Saint Francis called his vicar, preached on a time in the consistory before the pope and the cardinals, in the which consistory were men of diverse nations, to wit, Greeks, Latins, French, Germans and Slavs, and English, and of other diverse languages of the world; and being kindled by the Holy Spirit, he set forth to them the word of God so forcibly, so devoutly, so subtly, so sweetly, so clearly, and so learnedly,

that all they that were in the consistory, albeit they were of diverse languages, full clearly understood his every word, as distinctly as if he had spoken in the language of each one of them; and they were all amazed, and it seemed as though that ancient miracle of the Apostles at the time of Pentecost had been renewed, the which through the virtue of the Holy Spirit spake in every tongue; and they spake together one with the other marvelling: "Is he not of Spain, this preacher? and how then do we all hear in his speech the language of our countries?" The pope in like manner pondering and marvelling at the deep meaning of his words, said: "Of a truth, this man is the ark of the Testament and the armoury of Holy Writ."

St Antony's marvellous sermon

Chapter XL

Of the miracle which God wrought when Saint Antony, being at Rimini, preached to the fishes of the sea

THE blessed Christ, desiring to set forth the great sanctity of his most faithful servant, Saint Antony, with what devotion men should give ear unto his preaching and his holy doctrine, once on a time, amongst others, reproved the folly of the infidel heretics by means of the animals that have no reason, to wit, by the fishes, even as in old time in the Old Testament he had reproved the ignorance of Balaam by the mouth of the ass. Wherefore on a day Saint Antony being in Rimini, where was great company of

St Antony preaches to the fishes

heretics, desiring to bring them back to the light of the true faith and to the path of virtue, preached unto them for many days, and disputed of the faith of Christ and of the Holy Scripture: but they not only gave no consent unto his holy words, but therewithal, as men hardened and stiff-necked, would give no ear unto him. Inspired of God, Saint Antony went one day to the river-side hard by the sea; and standing thus upon the bank betwixt the river and the sea, began to speak after the manner of a preacher sent by God unto the fishes: "Hear the word of God, O ye fishes of the sea and of the river, since the infidel heretics refuse to hear it." And when he had thus spoken, forthwith there came unto him to the bank a multitude of fishes, great and small and what between, that never in that sea nor in that river had been seen so great a multitude; and they all held up their heads above the water and all stood attentive towards the face of Saint Antony, one and all in much great peace and gentleness and order; for in front and more a-nigh the bank stood the smaller fish, and behind them stood the fish of middle size, further behind where deeper water was the greater fishes stood. Therewith the fishes being thuswise set in order and array, Saint Antony began solemnly to preach, and so spake: "My brothers the fish, much are ye bounden so far as in ye lies, to give thanks to our Creator, who hath given you so noble an element for your abode; in such sort that as it pleaseth you, ye have sweet waters and salt; and hath given you many a refuge to escape

the storms withal: nay more, hath given you a clear, translucent element, and food by the which ye may live. God, your kind and bountiful Creator, when He created you, gave you commandment to increase and multiply, and poured on you His blessing: then whenas the deluge came and one and all the other beasts all died, you alone did God keep safe from harm. Moreover hath He given you fins that ye may roam where'er ye please. To you the grace was given, by God's command, to save the prophet Jonah, and after the third day to throw him safe and whole upon the land. Ye brought the tribute-money to our Lord Jesu Christ, who was so poor, He had not aught to pay. Ye were the food of the eternal King, Jesu Christ, before the Resurrection and thereafter, through a mystery wondrous rare; for all the which things much are ye bound to bless and praise God, who hath given you so many and so great blessings more than to other creatures." At these and the like words of Saint Antony, the fishes began to open their mouths and bow their heads, and with these and other signs of reverence in such fashion as best they might, gave praises unto God. Then Saint Antony, beholding this great reverence of the fishes unto God their Creator, rejoiced in spirit, and cried with a loud voice: "Blessed be God eternal, sith the fishes of the waters give Him more honour than do the heretics; and the animals that have no reason pay more heed unto His word than unbelieving men." And the more Saint Antony preached, the more did the

The sermon to the fishes

The conversion of the heretics

multitude of the fish increase, and no one of them left the place that he had taken. At the which miracle the people of the city began to run together, and among them the heretics aforesaid also drew nigh: the which beholding the miracle so marvellous and so clear, touched to the heart, fell all at the feet of Saint Antony to hear his words. Thereat Saint Antony began to preach of the catholic faith; and so nobly did he preach that all those heretics were converted, and turned them to the faith of Christ; and all the faithful abode in joy exceeding great, being comforted and strengthened in the faith. And this done, Saint Antony bade the fishes depart with the blessing of God; and all went thence with marvellous signs of joy, and likewise the people also. And thereafter Saint Antony abode in Rimini many days, preaching and reaping much spiritual fruit of souls.

Chapter XLI

How the venerable Brother Simon delivered from a grievous temptation a brother, that wished on this account to leave the Order

ABOUT the beginning of the Order of Saint Francis and while he was still alive, there came into the Order a young man of Assisi, the which was called Brother Simon: him God adorned and endowed with so much grace, such depth of contemplation and elevation of mind, that all his life was a mirror of virtue, according as I have heard from those that were long time

with him. Full seldom was he seen outside his celi, and at such times as he was with the brothers, he always spake of God. He had never learned the art of grammar; nathless he spake such profound and lofty things of God and of the love of Christ, that his words seemed supernatural; whence it befell that one evening when he had gone into the wood with Brother Jacques da Massa for to speak of God, and was speaking most sweetly of the love divine, they continued all the night in such discourse; and in the morning it seemed to them that they had been but a brief space together, even as was told me by the said Brother Jacques. And the said Brother Simon felt such pleasantness and sweetness of spirit in the divine enlightenment and loving visitations of God, that oftentimes, when he had sense of their approach, he would lay him down upon his bed; for the tranquil sweetness of the Holy Spirit required of him not only the repose of soul but of body, and in these divine visitations he was often rapt in God, and became all insensible to the things of the body. Wherefore on a time, when thuswise rapt in God and insensible to the world he inwardly burned with love divine, and with his bodily feelings had no sense at all of things without, a certain brother, desiring to make trial thereof, for to see if it were truly as it seemed to be, went and took a live coal from off the fire, and laid it on his naked foot. And Brother Simon felt it not a whit, and it made no mark upon his foot, albeit it remained thereon so long a time that it went out of its own self. The

The devotion of Brother Simon

The temptation of the Brother

said Brother Simon, when he set him down at table, before he took food for the body, would take for himself and give to others spiritual food, speaking of God. Through his devout discourse on a time was converted a young man of San Severino, the which in the world was a youth exceeding vain and worldly, and was of noble blood and much delicate of body; and Brother Simon receiving the said youth into the Order, put his secular clothes aside in his own charge; and the youth abode with Brother Simon to be taught by him the rules of the Order. But the devil, that striveth to thwart all good, assailed him with so fierce a temptation and so grievous a thorn in the flesh, that in no wise could he resist the same; for the which cause he went to Brother Simon, and said unto him: "Give me back my clothes that I brought with me from the world, for I can no more endure this temptation of the flesh." And Brother Simon having great compassion on him, said: "Sit here with me a little while, my son"; and he began to speak with him of God in such sort that all temptation left him: and when after a time the temptation came back and he asked for his clothes again, Brother Simon drove it away with speech of God. And when this had been so full many a time, at last one night the said temptation assailed him so grievously, even more than it was wont, that for naught in the world could he resist it, and going to Brother Simon, demanded of him again all his secular clothes, for that in no wise could he longer stay. Then Brother Simon,

even as he was wont to do, made him sit down beside him; and as he spake to him of God, the youth leaned his head upon the breast of Brother Simon, for sorrow and distress of soul. Then Brother Simon for the great pity's sake that he had, lifted up his eyes to heaven and prayed, and as he devoutly besought the Lord for him, he was rapt in God and his prayer was heard: whenas he returned to himself again, the young man found himself altogether freed from that temptation, as though he had felt it never a whit. The fire of temptation being thuswise changed into the fire of the Holy Spirit, for that he had drawn near unto the burning coal, to wit, unto Brother Simon, he became altogether inflamed with the love of God and of his neighbour; in so much that on a time a malefactor having been taken who was to have both his eyes put out, he, to wit, the youth aforesaid, for pity's sake went boldly unto the governor, and in open council, and with many tears and humble prayers besought that one of his eyes might be put out and one only of the malefactor's, for that he might not be deprived of both. But the governor and the council beholding the great fervour of the charity of this brother, forgave both the one and the other. It befell on a day while the said Brother Simon was at prayer in the wood and was feeling great consolation in his soul, that a flock of crows began to do him annoy with their cries; wherefore he bade them in the name of Jesu depart and return there no more: whereat the said birds departing thence, from that time forward were

Brother Simon's fervour

The miracle of the crows

no more seen nor heard, neither there nor in all the country round. And this miracle was manifested unto all the Custody of Fermo, wherein the said House lay.

Chapter XLII

Of the fair miracles that God wrought by the hands of the holy brothers, Brother Bentivoglia, Brother Peter of Monticello, and Brother Conrad of Offida: and how Brother Bentivoglia carried a leper fifteen miles in a very brief space; and how Saint Michael spake unto the other, and the Virgin Mary came unto the third and laid her Son in his arms

THE Province of the March of Ancona was in olden time adorned, even as the sky with stars, with brothers that were patterns of holy life; the which, like shining lights of heaven, have illumined and adorned the Order of Saint Francis and the world with ensamples and with doctrine. Among the rest, there was first of all Brother Lucido Antico, who was in very sooth resplendent with sanctity and burning with charity divine; whose glorious tongue, taught of the Holy Spirit, brought forth marvellous fruit in preaching. Another was Brother Bentivoglia of San Severino, the which was seen by Brother Masseo to be lifted up in the air for a great space, whilst he was at prayer in the wood; through the which miracle the devout Brother Masseo, being then a parish priest, left his cure

and became a Brother Minor; and he was of so great sanctity that he wrought many miracles, both when alive and dead, and his body rests at Murro. The aforesaid Brother Bentivoglia, while abiding on a time at Trave Bonanti alone, for to care for and serve a leper, was bidden by his superior to depart thence and go to another place that was fifteen miles off; not willing to abandon the leper, with great fervour of charity he took him up and set him on his shoulder, and carried him from dawn even unto sun-rise all that road of fifteen miles, to the place whither he had been sent, that was called Monte Sancino: the which journey, had he been an eagle, he could not have flown in so short a time: and in all that country round there was great marvel and amazement at so divine a miracle. Another was Brother Peter of Monticello, the which was seen by Brother Servodio of Urbino (he being then guardian in the old House of Ancona) lifted bodily off the ground five or six cubits, even to the feet of the Crucifix of the church, in front of which he was at prayer. And this Brother Peter, while fasting on a time with great devotion during the forty days' fast of Saint Michael the Archangel, and being at prayer in the church on the last day of this fast, was heard by a young brother (who of set purpose lay hidden under the high altar for to see some token of his sanctity) speaking with Saint Michael the Archangel; and the words that he said, were these: Quoth Saint Michael: "Brother Peter, thou hast toiled so faithfully

Brother Bentivoglia

Brother Peter and Saint Michael

for me, and in many ways hast afflicted thy body: lo! now am I come to comfort thee, and to the intent that thou mayest ask what grace soever thou wilt, and I will get it thee from God." Replied Brother Peter: "Most holy Prince of the celestial host, and faithful zealot of love divine, and pitying protector of souls, I ask this grace of thee that thou obtain from God the pardon of my sins." Replied Saint Michael: "Ask some other grace of me, for this grace shall I win for thee right easily"; but Brother Peter asking for nothing more, the Archangel concluded thus: "For the faith and devotion that thou hast to me, I will obtain for thee this grace thou askest for, and many more besides." And done their parley, the which lasted for a long space, the Archangel Saint Michael was away, leaving him comforted exceedingly. In the days of this holy Brother Peter, there lived also the holy Brother Conrad of Offida; while they dwelt together in the same House of Forana, in the Custody of Ancona, the said Brother Conrad went one day into the wood to meditate on God, and Brother Peter followed him by stealth, for to see what might befall him; and Brother Conrad began to pray, most devoutly beseeching the Virgin Mary with great piety to beg of her blessed Son this grace, that he might feel a little of that sweetness that Saint Simeon felt on the day of the Purification, when he held in his arms the blessed Saviour Jesu. And when he had made this prayer, the Virgin Mary of her pity heard him; and behold! there appeared unto

him the Queen of heaven with her blessed Son in her arms, with a great light exceeding bright, and coming near unto Brother Conrad, she laid in his arms her blessed Son: who taking Him with great devotion, embracing and kissing Him and pressing Him to his breast, was melted altogether and dissolved in the love divine and consolation unspeakable. And in like manner Brother Peter, who from his hiding-place saw all that befell, felt in his soul exceeding sweetness and consolation. And when the Virgin Mary had departed from Brother Conrad, Brother Peter gat him back in haste to the house, that he might not be seen of him: but thereafter, when Brother Conrad returned all joyful and glad, Brother Peter said unto him: "O what heavenly great consolation hast thou had this day!" Quoth Brother Conrad: "What is this that thou sayest, Brother Peter? and what dost thou know of that which I have had?" "I know full well, I know," said Brother Peter, "how the Virgin Mary with her blessed Son hath visited thee." Then Brother Conrad, who being truly humble desired to keep secret the favours of God, besought him that he would tell it unto no one; and from that time forth so great was the love between these twain, that they seemed to have but one heart and soul in all things. And on a time in the House of Siruolo, the said Brother Conrad set free by his prayers a woman that was possessed of a devil, praying for her a whole night through, and being seen by her mother, in the morning fled away, to the intent

The Virgin appears to Brother Conrad

He that he might not be found and honoured by the people.

converts a trouble-some youth

Chapter XLIII

How Brother Conrad of Offida converted a young brother that was troubling the other brethren. And how this young brother dying appeared to the said Brother Conrad, beseeching him to pray for him: and how by his prayer he set him free from the grievous pains of Purgatory

THE said Brother Conrad of Offida, marvellous zealot of gospel poverty and of the rule of Saint Francis, was of so religious a life and of so great merit in the sight of God, that Christ, the blessed One, honoured him in his life and death with many miracles; among the which, having come on a time as a guest to the House of Offida, the brothers prayed him, for the love of God and of charity, to admonish a young brother that was in that place, the which bore himself in a manner so childish and unruly and ungovernable, that he disturbed both old and young of the community in the divine office, and for the other observances of the rule cared little or naught. Wherefore Brother Conrad, in pity for the youth and at the prayers of the brothers, called the said brother aside one day and in fervour of charity spake unto him words of admonition so effective and devout, that by the working of the divine grace he suddenly changed in his behaviour from a boy to an old man, and became so obedient, and gentle, and careful, and devout, and thereafter so peaceful and service-

and prays for his soul

able, and so studious of all virtue, that, as at the first all the community had been disturbed by him, so were they all content with him and comforted, and loved him exceeding well. A while after, sith it was the will of God, after this his conversion the youth aforesaid died; whereof the said brothers were sore grieving; and a few days after his death his soul appeared unto Brother Conrad as he was devoutly praying before the altar of the said convent, and saluted him devoutly as a father; and Brother Conrad asked him: "Who art thou?" He answered, and said: "I am the soul of that young brother that died in these days." Quoth Brother Conrad: "O my son most dear, how is it with thee?" He answered: "By the grace of God and your admonishments, it is well; seeing that I am not damned, but for certain of my sins, whereof I had not time sufficiently to purge me, I suffer the grievous pains of Purgatory: but I pray thee, father, that even as of thy pity thou didst succour me whilst yet I lived, so now thou wilt be pleased to help me in my pains, saying a Paternoster for me; sith thy prayer is much acceptable in the sight of God." Then Brother Conrad consenting gently unto his prayers, and saying the Paternoster once for him and the *Requiem aeternam*, quoth that soul: "O father most dear, what blessedness and sweet refreshment do I feel! now I pray thee that thou say it once again." And Brother Conrad said it: and when that it was said, quoth the soul: "Holy father, when thou pray-

which goes to Paradise

est for me I feel my pains assuaged; wherefore I do beseech thee that thou cease not praying for me." Thereat Brother Conrad, seeing that this soul was so much helped by his prayers, said for him a hundred Paternosters; and when that they were said, quoth the soul: "I thank thee, father most dear, in the name of God, for the love that thou hast shown me; for through thy prayers am I set free from all my pains, and now am I going to the celestial kingdom"; and this said, the soul was away. Then Brother Conrad, for to give joy and comfort to the brethren, told unto them all this vision in order. And thus the soul of that youth went to Paradise through the merits of Brother Conrad.

Chapter XLIV

How there appeared unto Brother Conrad the Mother of Christ, Saint John the Evangelist, and Saint Francis; and told him which of them had the greater grief for the Passion of Christ

AT the time when there dwelt together in the Custody of Ancona, in the House of Forano, Brother Conrad and the aforesaid Brother Peter, the which were two shining stars in the Province of the March, and like denizens of heaven; for between them was there such love as seemed to spring from one and the self-same heart and self-same soul, they bound themselves together each to each by this agreement, that every consolation that the mercy of God

might vouchsafe them, they would reveal the one unto the other in love. This fact being established between them, it befell on a day that Brother Peter being at prayer, and most devoutly meditating on the Passion of Christ, and how the most blessed Mother of Christ, and John the Evangelist, the most beloved disciple, and Saint Francis, were depicted at the foot of the Cross through grief of soul being crucified with Christ, there came to him a longing to know which of those three had the greater grief for the Passion of Christ: His Mother, that had borne Him; or the Disciple, that had slept upon His breast; or Saint Francis, that had with Christ been crucified: and as he continued in such pious thoughts, there appeared unto him the Virgin Mary, with Saint John the Evangelist, and Saint Francis, clad in the noblest robes of beatific glory; but Saint Francis appeared clad in more beautiful vesture than Saint John. And Peter being sore adread at this vision, Saint John comforted him, and said: "Fear not, dear brother, seeing that we are come to console thee in thy doubt. Know then that the Mother of Christ and I above all other creatures sorrowed for the Passion of Christ; but next after us Saint Francis felt greater grief than all others: wherefore dost thou behold him in so great glory." And Brother Peter asked him: "Most holy Apostle of Christ, wherefore doth the vesture of Saint Francis appear more beautiful than thine?" Replied Saint John: "The reason thereof is: because when he was in the world,

The vision of Brother Peter

Brother John of La Penna

he wore on his back viler raiment than I." And said these words, Saint John gave unto Brother Peter a glorious robe that he was carrying in his hand, and said unto him: "Take this robe, which I have brought for to give it thee"; and when Saint John sought to array him in this robe, Brother Peter fell to the ground, sore amazed, and began to cry out: "Brother Conrad, Brother Conrad most dear, quick, help me; come and see things wonderful"; and at these holy words that holy vision vanished from his sight. Then Brother Conrad coming, he told him everything in order; and they gave thanks unto God.

Chapter XLV

Of the conversion and life and miracles and death of the holy Brother John of La Penna

WHEN Brother John of La Penna was a boy in the Province of the March and still living the secular life, there appeared unto him one night a child exceeding beautiful, and called him, saying: "John, go unto Saint Stephen's, where is preaching one of the Brothers Minor, in whose teaching do thou believe and give heed unto his words, seeing that I have sent him thither; and this done, thou hast a long journey to take, and then shalt thou come unto me." Whereat straightway he arose and felt a great change within his soul. And coming to Saint Stephen's, he found there a great multitude of men and of women, that were gathered together for to hear the preaching. And he that

was to preach was a brother, by name Brother Philip, the which was one of the first brothers that had come to the March of Ancona; and as yet there were but few Houses in the March. This Brother Philip stood up to preach, and preached exceeding devoutly, not with words of human wisdom, but by virtue of the spirit of Christ, making known the kingdom of eternal life. And done the preaching, the boy aforesaid went to Brother Philip, and said unto him: "Father, if it please thee to receive me into the Order, I would do penance willingly and serve our Lord Jesu Christ." Brother Philip seeing and recognizing in the boy a right marvellous innocence and ready will to serve God, said unto him: "Thou shalt come to me on such a day at Recanati, and I will have thee received": for in this place was to be held the Provincial Chapter. Whereby the boy, being very pure in heart, thought that this would be the long journey that he was to take, according to the revelation that he had had, and that thereafter he would go to Paradise; and so he thought to do straightway after he had been received into the Order. So he went and was received: but perceiving that his thoughts were not fulfilled at that time, and the Minister in Chapter saying that whoso desired to go into the province of Provence, for the merit of holy obedience, would have leave granted to him willingly, there came to him a great desire to go there, thinking in his heart that that would be the long journey that he must take, before he went to Paradise: but shaming to say so, at the

He is received into the Order

Christ appears to him

last he confided in Brother Philip aforesaid, the which had let receive him into the Order, and besought him tenderly that he would obtain for him this favour of going to the province of Provence. Then Brother Philip, seeing his purity and his holy purpose, obtained for him leave thereto: so Brother John, with great joy, set out upon his way, bethinking him that, done this journey, he would go to Paradise. But sith it pleased God, he abode in the said province five and twenty years in that expectation and desire, shewing himself a pattern of holy life, increasing always in virtue and favour with God and the people, and was exceeding much beloved by the brothers and by those in the world. And as Brother John was praying devoutly one day, and weeping and lamenting for that his desire was not fulfilled, and that his life's pilgrimage was so much prolonged, there appeared unto him Christ, the blessed One, at the sight of whom his soul was all melted within him, and spake thus unto him: "My son, Brother John, ask of me whatsoever thou wilt"; and he replied: "My Lord, I know not what to ask of Thee save Thyself alone, for naught do I desire save Thee: but for this alone do I pray Thee, that Thou forgive me all my sins, and grant me grace to see Thee yet another time, when I have the greater need thereof." Jesu said: "Thy prayer is granted." And this said He was away, and Brother John remained altogether comforted. At length, the brothers of the March hearing of the fame of his sanctity, prevailed with the General to bid him

by holy obedience return to the March; and he receiving this obedience, set out joyfully on his way, bethinking him that, done this journey, he needs would go to heaven, according to the promise of Christ. But when that he had returned to the Province of the March, he lived therein for thirty years, and none of his kinsfolk knew him again; and every day he looked for the mercy of God, that it should fulfil His promise to him. And in those days he many times filled the office of guardian with great discretion; and God wrought through him many miracles. And among the other gifts that he received of God, he had the spirit of prophecy; now on a time it befell that when he was away from the House, one of his novices was assailed by the devil and so grievously tempted that, consenting unto the temptation, he was minded to leave the Order, so soon as Brother John should have come back again; the which matter, and temptation, and the thoughts of his heart, being known unto Brother John through the spirit of prophecy, he straightway returned home, and called the said novice unto him, and bade him confess himself: but before he confessed, he told him in order all his temptation, according as God had revealed it unto him, and ended thus: "My son, because thou hast waited for me and wouldest not depart without my blessing, God hath given thee this grace that never shalt thou leave this Order, but by the grace of God shalt die in the Order." Thereat the said novice was strengthened in good will, and remaining in the

His spirit of prophecy

His trials and pains

Order became a holy brother: and all these things were told me by Brother Ugolino. The said Brother John, who was a man of cheerful and tranquil mind, spake but seldom, and was much given to prayer and devotion, and above all after Matins he would not return to his cell, but would continue in prayer in the church until daylight; and while he was thus praying one night after Matins, the Angel of God appeared unto him, saying: "Brother John, now is finished thy journey, for the which thou hast waited so long; wherefore, in the name of God, I announce unto thee that thou mayest ask whatsoever grace thou wilt. And likewise I announce unto thee that thou mayest choose which thou wilt,—or one day in Purgatory, or seven days' pain on earth." And Brother John choosing rather the seven days' pain on earth, straightway fell sick of divers infirmities; for a grievous fever seized him, and gout in his hands and his feet, and pains in his side, and many other ills; but what was more grievous to him was that a devil stood before him and held in his hand a great scroll, whereon were written all the sins that he had ever done or thought, and said to him: "For these sins that thou hast done in thought, word, and deed, art thou damned to the depths of hell." And he could not call to mind any good deed that he had ever done, either in the Order or elsewhere, and so he thought that he was damned, even as the devil said. Wherefore, if any asked him how he fared, he would answer: "Ill, sith I am damned." Seeing this, the brothers sent for an

aged brother called Brother Matthew of Monte Rubbiano, the which was a holy man and a close friend of this Brother John; and the said Brother Matthew coming to him on the seventh day of his trouble, saluted him and asked him how he fared. He replied that he fared ill, sith he was damned. Then quoth Brother Matthew: "Dost thou not remember how thou hast oftentimes confessed thyself to me, and I have wholly absolved thee of all thy sins? Dost thou not remember also that thou hast served God continuously in this holy Order many years? Besides, dost thou not remember that the mercy of God is greater than all the sins of the world, and that the blessed Christ, our Saviour, paid an infinite price for our redemption? Wherefore be of good hope that of a surety thou art saved"; and with these words, since the time of his purification was accomplished, the temptation left him, and he was comforted. And with great joy Brother John spake unto Brother Matthew: "Since thou art wearied and the hour is late, I pray thee go and rest thyself"; and Brother Matthew was loth to leave him; but at length, at his much urging, he left him and went to lie down: and Brother John remained alone with a brother that did him service. And behold! Christ, the blessed One, came with great splendour and with fragrance of exceeding sweetness, even as He had promised to appear to him a second time when his need was greater, and He healed him thoroughly of all his sickness. Then Brother John with hands clasped gave thanks

He passes to eternal life

Brother Humble and Brother Peaceful

unto God that he had made so good an end of the long journey of this miserable life, commended his soul into the hands of Christ and gave it up to God, passing from this mortal life unto life eternal with Christ, the blessed One, whom he had so long desired and waited to behold. And the said Brother John rests in the convent of La Penna of Saint John.

Chapter XLVI

How Brother Peaceful being at prayer saw the soul of Brother Humble, his brother, going up to heaven

IN the aforesaid Province of the March, after the death of Saint Francis, there were two brothers in the Order; the one named Brother Humble and the other Brother Peaceful, the which were men of exceeding great sanctity and perfection; and the one, to wit, Brother Humble, abode in the House of Soffiano, and there died; and the other belonged to another community at some distance therefrom. Now it pleased God that as Brother Peaceful was at prayer one day in a lonely place, he was rapt in ecstasy, and saw the soul of his brother, Brother Humble, that had just then left the body, going straight up into heaven without either let or hindrance. It befell that, many years after, Brother Peaceful, being still alive, was sent to the community in the aforesaid House of Soffiano, where his brother had died. About this time the brothers, at the request of the lords of Bruforte, exchanged the

said House for another ; wherefore, among other things, they carried with them the relics of the holy brothers that had died in that House, and coming to the grave of Brother Humble, his brother, Brother Peaceful took up his bones, and washed them with good wine and wrapped them in a white napkin, and with great reverence and devotion kissed them and wept over them ; whereat the other brothers marvelled, and deemed he set them no good example ; in that it seemed that, albeit a man of so great sanctity, he mourned for his brother, with a carnal and a worldly love ; and that he showed more devotion to his relics than to those of the other brothers that had been of no less sanctity than Brother Humble, and whose relics were worthy of as much reverence as his. And Brother Peaceful knowing the evil imaginings of the brothers, humbly satisfied them thereof, and said unto them : "My brothers most dear, marvel not that I have done for the bones of my brother what I have not done for the others ; for, blessed be God, I was not moved thereto, as ye deem, by carnal love ; but so have I done, for that, when my brother passed away from this life, I praying in a lonely place and distant far from him, beheld his soul rise straight to heaven, whereby I am assured that his bones are holy and should be in Paradise. And if God had granted me such surety touching the other brothers, then would I have paid the self same reverence unto their bones." For the which cause, the brothers, seeing his holy and devout intent, were through

Brother Peaceful's vision

him well edified, and gave praise unto God, that doeth such marvellous things unto His holy ones, the brothers.

The sick Brother Minor

Chapter XLVII

Of the holy brother unto whom appeared the Mother of Christ, what time he was sick, bringing him three boxes of electuary

IN the above-mentioned House of Soffiano there was in former times a Brother Minor of so great sanctity and grace that he seemed altogether divine, and oftentimes was rapt in God. Once on a time this brother being wholly absorbed in God and lifted up, for he had in notable fashion the grace of contemplation, there came unto him birds of divers kinds, and settled, as they were tame, on his shoulders and on his head, and on his arms and his hands, and sang right marvellously. He loved to be alone and spake but seldom; but when he was questioned touching any matter, he would answer so wisely and so graciously that he seemed rather an angel than a man; and he abounded much in prayer and contemplation; and the brothers held him in high reverence. This brother having finished the course of his virtuous life, according to God's ordinance, fell sick unto death, so that he could take no food at all; and therewithal would take no carnal medicine, but all his trust was in the heavenly physician, Jesu Christ, the blessed One, and in His blessed Mother; by whom through the divine clemency he merited to be mercifully visited and tended. Wherefore on a time as he

was lying on his bed and preparing himself for death with all his heart and with utter devotion, there appeared unto him the Virgin Mary, Mother of Christ, with a very great company of Angels and of holy Virgins, in marvellous splendour, and drew nigh unto his bed; whereat, gazing upon her, he took great comfort and joy, both in soul and body; and began to beseech her humbly that she would pray her beloved Son that of His merits He would take him out of the prison of this miserable flesh. And as he continued in this prayer with many tears, the Virgin Mary answered him, calling him by his name, and said: "Be not doubting, my son, for thy prayer is heard, and I am come to comfort thee a little, ere thou depart from out his life." Now there were beside the Virgin Mary three holy Virgins, that carried in their hands three boxes of electuary of surpassing fragrance and sweetness. Then the glorious Virgin took and opened one of these boxes, and all the house was filled with sweet odours; and taking of this electuary with a spoon, she gave unto the sick man: the which, so soon as he had tasted, felt such comfort and such sweetness, that it seemed as though his soul could stay within his body no longer; wherefore he began to say: "No more, O most holy and blessed Virgin Mother, O blessed physician and saviour of human kind, no more; for I cannot endure such sweetness." But the kind and pitying Mother gave of this electuary unto the sick man many times and made him to take it, until all the box was

The Virgin appears to him

The three boxes of electuary

emptied. Then when the first box was empty, the blessed Virgin took the second, and put the spoon therein for to give it him; whereat he murmured, saying: "O most blessed Mother of God, my soul is well-nigh all melted away through the ardour and the sweetness of the first electuary: then how may I endure the second? I pray thee, blessed above all saints and angels, that thou seek not to give me more." Replied the glorious Virgin Mary: "Taste, my son, yet a little of this second box." And giving him a little thereof, she said: "To-day, my son, thou hast as much as is sufficient for thee; be comforted, my son, for soon shall I come for thee and take thee to the kingdom of my Son, the which thou hast ever sought and desired"; and this said, she took leave of him and was away; and he remained so consoled and comforted through the sweetness of this confection that, being stayed therewith, he lived many days more, strong and well, without any food for the body. And after some days, while speaking joyfully with the brothers, with great gladness and delight he passed away from this miserable life.

Chapter XLVIII

How Brother Jacques of La Massa saw in a dream all the Brothers Minor in the world, in the likeness of a tree, and learned the virtue and the merits and the vices of each

BROTHER JACQUES of La Massa, unto whom God opened the door of His secrets, and gave perfect knowledge and under-

standing of the Holy Scriptures and of things to come, was of so great sanctity that Brother Giles of Assisi, and Brother Mark of Montino, and Brother Juniper, and Brother Lucido said of him: that they knew of no one in the world that found greater favour in the sight of God than this Brother Jacques. I had a great desire to see him; for when I besought Brother John, a companion of the said Brother Giles, to expound unto me certain spiritual matters, he said unto me: "If thou desire to be well instructed in the spiritual life, strive to have speech of Brother Jacques of La Massa (for Brother Giles desired to be taught of him), and to his words naught can be added nor aught be taken away, for his mind hath entered into the secret things of heaven, and his words are the words of the Holy Spirit, and there is no man on earth whom I so much desire to see." This Brother Jacques, in the beginning of the ministry of Brother John of Parma, while praying on a time was rapt in God, and he abode three days thus rapt in ecstasy, with all bodily feeling suspended, in such fashion that the brothers doubted whether he was not dead: and being thus rapt, it was revealed to him of God, what must needs befall and happen to our religion: for the which cause, when I heard thereof, my desire was increased to hear him and have speech with him. And when it pleased God that I should have leisure to speak with him, I besought him in this manner: "If that which I have heard tell of thee be true, I pray thee that thou keep it

Brother Jacques of La Massa

The vision of the tree

not hidden from me. I have heard that when thou wast for three days as one dead, among other things that God revealed, was that which should happen unto this our religion: and that was told unto me by Brother Matthew, minister of the March, to whom thou didst reveal it by holy obedience." Then Brother Jacques with great humility confessed that what Brother Matthew had said, was true. And the words that he spake, to wit Brother Matthew, the minister of the March, were these: "I know a brother, unto whom God hath revealed whatsoever will happen in our religion; for Brother Jacques of La Massa hath told me and said that after many things that God revealed to him touching the estate of the Church militant, he beheld in a dream a tree fair to see and very great, whose root was of gold, and its fruits were men, and they were all of them Brothers Minor; its main branches were distinctly marked according to the number of the provinces of the Order, and each branch had as many brothers as there were in the province whose name was written on the branch. And thus he knew the number of all the brothers in the Order, of each province, and likewise their names and the age and condition of each, and the great offices and the dignities and the grace of all of them, and the faults. And he saw Brother John of Parma on the highest point of the midmost branch of this tree, and on the tops of the branches that were round about this midmost branch, were the ministers of all the provinces. And thereafter he saw Christ

sitting on a throne exceeding great and shining, and Christ called Saint Francis up thither and gave him a chalice full of the spirit of life, and sent him forth saying: "Go, visit thy brothers, and give them to drink of this chalice of the spirit of life; for the spirit of Satan will rise up against them and will strike them, and many of them will fall and will not rise up again." And Christ gave unto Saint Francis two angels to bear him company. Then came Saint Francis to give the chalice of life to his brothers: and he gave it first to Brother John of Parma: who, taking it, drank it all in haste, devoutly; and straightway he became all shining like the sun. And after him Saint Francis gave it to all the other brothers in order: and there were but few among them that took it with due reverence and devotion, and drank it all. Those that took it devoutly and drank it all, became straightway shining like the sun; but those that spilled it all and took it not devoutly, became black, and dark, and misshapen, and horrible to see; but those that drank part and spilled part, became partly shining and partly dark, and more so or less according to the measure of their drinking or spilling thereof. But the aforesaid Brother John was resplendent above all the rest, the which had more completely drunk the chalice of life, whereby he had the more deeply gazed into the abyss of the infinite light divine: and had learned therein of the adversity and the tempest that was to rise up against this tree and shake and toss its branches. For the which cause the said

The chalice of life

A wind-storm shakes the tree

Brother John came down from the top of the branch whereon he stood; and going down below all the branches hid himself in the solid root, and was all rapt in thought; and one of the brothers that had taken part of the chalice and part had spilt, climbed up on to that branch and to that place, whence Brother John had come down. And when he was come to that place, the nails of his hands became iron, sharp and keen as razors: whereat he left the place to which he had climbed, and with rage and fury sought to hurl himself upon the said Brother John for to do him hurt. But, seeing this, Brother John cried aloud and commended himself to Christ that sat upon the throne; and at the voice of his crying Christ called unto him Saint Francis, and gave him a sharp flint stone, and said unto him: "Take this stone and cut off the nails of that brother, wherewith he would fain tear Brother John, so that he may do him no hurt." Then Saint Francis came and did even as Christ had commanded. And this done, there arose a storm of wind, and shook the tree so violently that the brothers fell down on to the ground; and first fell all they that had spilled all the chalice of the spirit of life, and were carried away by the devils to places of darkness and torment. But Brother John, together with the others that had drunk all the chalice, were borne by the angels unto the place of life, and of light eternal, and beatific splendour. And the aforesaid Brother Jacques, that saw the vision, understood and discerned distinctly and separ-

ately all that he saw, touching the name and condition and state of each one of them clearly. And so long did that storm beat against the tree that it fell, and the wind carried it away. Then, when the storm ceased, straightway from the golden root of this tree there sprang up another tree that was all of gold, the which brought forth leaves and flowers and fruit of gold. Of this tree, and how it spread out its branches and fixed deep its root, and of its beauty and fragrance and virtue, it were better to keep silence than to speak thereon at this present.

and sweeps it away

Chapter XLIX

How Jesu Christ appeared unto Brother John of Alvernia

AMONG the other wise and holy brothers and sons of Saint Francis, who, as Solomon saith, are the glory of their father, there was in our time, in the said Province of the March, the venerable and holy Brother John of Fermo, the which was called also Brother John of Alvernia by reason of the long time that he dwelt in the holy House of Alvernia, and because he there passed away from this life; for he was a man of wonderful life and of great sanctity. This Brother John, while yet a boy and living in the world, desired with all his heart to tread the path of penitence that keepeth pure both body and soul; whereby being still a little child, he began to wear the shirt of mail and iron girdle on his flesh, and to use great abstinence; and above all, while he dwelt with the Canons of

Brother John of Alvernia

Saint Peter of Fermo, that lived in great splendour, he shunned all carnal delights and mortified his body with great severity of abstinence; but seeing that his companions there were much set against him, the which robbed him of his shirt of mail and in divers manners hindered his abstinence, inspired of God he minded to leave the world with the lovers thereof, and to offer himself wholly unto the arms of the Crucified, in the habit of the crucified Saint Francis; and even so he did. And being received into the Order while yet a boy, and committed unto the care of the master of the novices, he became so spiritually minded and so devout, that many a time hearing the said master speaking of God, his heart would melt like wax before the fire; and the love of God kindled in him such sweetness of grace, that not being able to remain still to endure such sweetness, he would get up, and as one drunken in spirit, would run, now through the garden, now through the wood, now through the church, according as the flame and the ardour of the spirit drave him. Then in course of time the divine grace made this angelic soul to grow continually from virtue unto virtue, and in heavenly gifts, being uplifted unto God and rapt in ecstacy; so that at one time his mind was lifted up to the splendours of the Cherubim, at another time to the ardours of the Seraphim, at another to the joys of the Blessed, at another to the loving and ineffable embraces of Christ. And above all, once upon a time in exceeding wondrous fashion his heart was kindled with the fire of love divine,

and this flame lasted in him for full three years, in the which time he received marvellous consolations and visitations divine, and oftentimes was rapt in God, and in short, in the said time he seemed all on fire and burning with the love of Christ: and all this was on the holy mount of Alvernia. But seeing that God careth with tender care for his children, giving them, at divers times, now consolation, and now tribulation, now prosperity, and now adversity, according as He seeth they have need thereof, for to continue in humility, or for to kindle more in them desire for heavenly things; it pleased the divine goodness, after three years, to take away from the said Brother John that ray and fire of love divine, and reave him of all spiritual consolation. Whereby Brother John remained without the light and love of God, and altogether disconsolate and afflicted and distressed. For the which cause, being in such anguish, he went through the wood running hither and thither, calling with cries and tears and sighs on the beloved spouse of his soul, who had hidden himself and gone away from him, and without whose presence his soul could find no rest and no repose: but in no place and in no manner could he find his sweet Jesu again, nor taste again those sweet spiritual draughts of the love of Jesu Christ, as he had been wont. And this tribulation endured for many days, in the which he abode continually weeping and sighing, and praying God that of His pity He would give back to him the beloved spouse of his soul. At

He receives divine visitations

Christ appears to him

the last, when it pleased God to have made trial enough of his patience and to have kindled his desire, on a day when Brother John was going through the wood in such affliction and distress, he sat him down for very weariness, leaning against a beech tree, and remained with his face all bathed in tears looking up to heaven,—behold! suddenly Jesu Christ appeared hard by him in the path, whereby Brother John had come, but spake naught. Brother John seeing Him and knowing full well that it was Christ, straightway threw himself at His feet, and with sore weeping besought Him very humbly, saying: "Help me, O Lord, for without Thee, my most sweet Saviour, I am full of darkness and weeping; without Thee, most gentle lamb, I am full of anguish and pain and fear: without Thee, Son of God most high, I am full of confusion and shame: without Thee, I am bereft of all good and am blind, since Thou art Jesu Christ, the true light of souls; without Thee, I am lost and damned, for Thou art the life of souls, and the life of lives; without Thee, I am barren and dry, for Thou art the fountain of every gift and grace; without Thee, I am altogether disconsolate, for Thou art Jesu our redemption, our love, and our desire, the bread of comfort, and the wine that maketh glad the hearts of the Angels, and the hearts of all the Saints: enlighten me, most gracious Master, and most tender Shepherd, for I am Thy little sheep, unworthy though I be." But sith the desire of holy men, when God delays to hear, doth kindle

in them greater love and merit, Christ, the blessed One, departed without hearing him, and without speaking to him aught at all, and he went by the little pathway aforesaid. Then Brother John arose, and ran after Him, and once again threw himself at His feet, and with holy importunity held Him back, and with most devout tears besought Him, and said: "O most sweet Jesu Christ, have mercy upon me in my trouble; hear me for the multitude of Thy mercies, and for the truth of Thy salvation, and give back to me the joy of Thy countenance and Thy glance of pity, for the whole world is full of Thy mercy." And still Christ departed and spake naught unto him, nor gave him any comfort; and He dealt with him even as a mother with her child, when she makes him desire the breast and makes him run behind weeping, to the end that he may thereafter receive it the more willingly. Whereat Brother John still followed Christ with greater fervour and desire; and when he was come close up to Him, the blessed Christ turned and looked upon him with a glad countenance and gracious; and opening His most holy and most pitying arms, embraced him very tenderly; and as He opened thus His arms, Brother John saw streaming from the most sacred breast of the Saviour rays of shining light, which illumined all the wood and him likewise, both in body and soul. Then Brother John kneeled him down at the feet of Christ; and the blessed Christ of His loving kindness gave him His foot to kiss, as He did to the Magdalene; and Brother John holding it

and comforts him

and grants his prayers

and with all reverence, bathed it with so many tears that of a sooth he seemed a second Magdalene, and said devoutly: "I pray Thee, Lord, that Thou look not on my sins, but by Thy most holy passion and by the shedding of Thy most holy blood, revive my soul in the grace of Thy love; sith this is Thy commandment, that we love Thee with all our heart and with all our soul; the which commandment none can keep without Thy help. Help me then, most beloved Son of God, that I may love Thee with all my heart and with all my strength." And as Brother John with such words lay at the feet of Christ, his prayer was heard, and he received from Him the first grace, to wit the flame of love divine, and he felt altogether renewed and comforted; and knowing within himself that the gift of divine grace had returned to him again, he began to give thanks unto the blessed Christ and devoutly kiss His feet. And as he rose up, to gaze upon the face of Christ, Jesu Christ stretched out His most holy hands for him to kiss; and when that Brother John had kissed them, he drew near and leaned upon the breast of Jesu and embraced and kissed Him; and Christ in like manner embraced and kissed him. And in this kiss and this embrace, Brother John perceived so divine a fragrance, that had all the fragrant spices and all the sweet-smelling things of all the earth been gathered together, they would have seemed but as a stench in comparison with that fragrance; and thereat was Brother John right well illumined and consoled, and that fragrance remained within

his soul for many months. And thenceforth, from out his mouth that had drunk of the fountain of divine wisdom in the sacred breast of the Saviour, there came forth marvellous and celestial words, that changed the hearts of men and brought forth rich fruit of souls in whoso heard them. And in the little path in the wood, whereon the blessed feet of Christ had stood, and for a great space all around, did Brother John always perceive that fragrance and behold that splendour, whene'er he fared thither, and eke for a long time thereafter. Whenas Brother John returned to himself again after this ecstasy, and the bodily presence of Christ had disappeared, he remained so illumined in his soul, from the abyss of His divinity, that albeit he was not a man learned through human study, yet in marvellous fashion he solved and explained the most subtle and lofty questions touching the divine Trinity, and the deep mysteries of the Holy Scripture. And oftentimes thereafter, when he spake before the pope, and the cardinals, and the king, and his barons, and the masters, and doctors, they were all amazed at the lofty words and the profound thoughts that he spake.

Brother John's power of speech

Chapter L

How Brother John of Alvernia, as he said mass on All Souls' Day, saw many souls delivered from Purgatory

AS the aforesaid Brother John was on a time saying the Mass on the day after All Saints' for the souls of all the dead, according

He saves souls from Purgatory

as the Church has ordained, with such effectual charity and such pitying compassion did he offer that glorious sacrament, (which for its saving power, the souls of the dead desire above all other blessings that can be poured upon them), that he seemed altogether as though he were melted with the sweetness of pity and brotherly love. For the which cause as he devoutly elevated the Body of Christ in that Mass, and offered it unto God the Father, and prayed that for the love of His beloved Son Jesu Christ, who for the redemption of souls had hung upon the cross, it would please Him to set free from the pains of Purgatory the souls of the dead He had created and redeemed, —straightway he saw a multitude of souls wellnigh without number coming forth from Purgatory, like countless sparks of fire coming out of a blazing furnace, and he beheld them rise up to heaven, through the merits of the passion of Christ, who every day is offered for the quick and the dead in that most sacred Host, that is worthy to be adored in *sæcula sæculorum.*

Chapter LI

Of the holy Brother Jacques of Fallerone; and how after his death, he appeared unto Brother John of Alvernia

AT the time when Brother Jacques of Fallerone, a man of great sanctity, was grievously sick in the House of Moliano in the Custody of Fermo, Brother John of Alvernia, who was then abiding in the House of La Massa, came to

hear of his sickness, and, sith he loved him as he were his own dear father, set himself to pray for him, devoutly beseeching God in his heart to grant unto the said Brother Jacques health of body, if so be that it was for the good of his soul. And as he thus devoutly prayed, he was rapt in ecstasy, and saw in the air above his cell, that was in the wood, a great host of Angels and Saints, shining with such splendour, that all the country round was lit up therewith: and in the midst of these angels he beheld that sick Brother Jacques, for whom he prayed, all resplendent in white robes. Among them likewise he beheld the blessed Father Saint Francis, adorned with the holy Stigmata of Christ and with much glory. Moreover he saw and recognized the holy Brother Lucido, and Brother Matthew Antico of Monte Rubbiano, and many other brothers, the which in this life he had never seen or known. And as Brother John was thus gazing with great joy upon this blessed company of Saints, it was revealed to him that of a surety the soul of the said sick brother would be saved, and of that sickness he must die; but that he would not go to Paradise straightway after his death, but he needs must be a little purified in Purgatory. At this revelation did Brother John feel so great joy, by reason of the salvation of the soul, that for the death of the body he gave no thought at all; but with much sweetness of spirit he called him, saying within himself: "Brother Jacques, sweet father mine; Brother Jacques, sweet my brother; Brother Jacques, most faithful servant and friend of God;

He prays for a sick brother

The salvation of the soul

Brother Jacques, companion of the Angels, in fellowship with the blessed." And so in this certitude and joy he returned to himself again; and straightway he departed from the House and went to visit the said Brother Jacques at Moliano: and finding him so weighed down with sickness that he scarce could speak, he announced to him the death of the body, and the salvation and glory of the soul, according to the certitude that he had thereof, by divine revelation; so that Brother Jacques, full of joy in heart and face, received him with great gladness and with merry laughter, giving him thanks for the glad tidings that he brought, and commending himself devoutly unto him. Then Brother John besought him tenderly that after his death he would come back to him and tell him of his state; and Brother Jacques promised him so to do, if so it were pleasing unto God. And said these words, as the hour of his departure drew near, Brother Jacques began devoutly to recite the verse of the Psalm: "In pace in idipsum dormiam et requiescam," that is to say: "In peace shall I sleep and rest in the life eternal": and said this verse, with joyful and glad countenance he passed away from this life. And after that he was buried, Brother John returned to the House of La Massa, and waited for the promise of Brother Jacques that he would return to him on the day that he had said. But on the said day, as he was praying, Christ appeared unto him with a great company of Angels and Saints, and Brother Jacques was not among them; whereat Brother

John, greatly marvelling, commended him devoutly unto Christ. On the following day, as Brother John was praying in the wood, there appeared unto him Brother Jacques, accompanied by Angels, all glorious and glad, and Brother John said unto him: "O father most dear, wherefore didst thou not return to me on the day thou didst promise me?" Replied Brother Jacques: "For that I had need of some purifying; but in that same hour that Christ appeared to thee and thou didst commend me unto Him, Christ heard thee and set me free from all pain. And then I appeared unto Brother Jacques of La Massa, a holy lay-brother; the which was serving the Mass and saw the consecrated Host, what time the priest elevated it, changed and transformed in the likeness of a most beautiful living child; and to him I said: "This day am I going with this child unto the kingdom of eternal life, unto the which none may go without him." And said these words, Brother Jacques vanished out of sight; and he went up into heaven with all that blessed company of Angels; and Brother John remained much comforted. The said Brother Jacques of Fallerone died on the vigil of Saint James the Apostle, in the month of July, in the aforesaid House of Moliano; wherein after his death many miracles were wrought through his merits by the divine goodness.

Brother Jacques appears to Brother John

Chapter LII

Of the vision of Brother John of Alvernia, whereby he understood all the order of the Holy Trinity

The fervour of Brother John

FOR that the aforesaid John of Alvernia had perfectly renounced all worldly and temporal delights and consolations, and had set all his delight and all his hope in God, the divine goodness gave unto him marvellous consolations and revelations, and especially on the high festivals of Christ; so on a time when the festival of the nativity of Christ was drawing nigh, on the which he looked that of a surety he would receive of God consolation from the sweet humanity of Jesu, the Holy Spirit put into his soul such great and exceeding love and fervour for the charity of Christ, whereby He humbled Himself to take upon Him our humanity, that of a sooth it seemed as if his soul was drawn out of his body and was burning like a furnace. Not being able to endure this fire of love, he was in anguish and was altogether melted away, and cried out with a loud voice: for through the vehemence of the Holy Spirit and the too much fervour of his love, he could not refrain himself from crying out. And in that same hour wherein this immeasurable fervour came upon him, there came to him therewithal so strong and sure a hope of his salvation, that for naught in the world could he believe, that were he then to die, would he have need to pass through the pains of Purgatory; and this love

endured in him for full six months, albeit he felt not that excessive fervour continuously, but it came to him at certain hours of the day. And in that time he received marvellous visitations and consolations from God: and oftentimes he was rapt in ecstasy, even as was seen by that brother who first wrote of these things; among the which at one time he was so lifted up and rapt in God, that he beheld in Him, the Creator, all created things both of heaven and earth, and all their perfections, and grades, and distinct orders. And then he clearly knew how every created thing presented itself to its Creator, and how God is above, and within, and without, and beside all created things. Thereafter he perceived God as One in Three Persons, and Three Persons in One God; and the infinite love that caused the Son of God to become incarnate, in obedience to the Father. And in the end he perceived in that vision how that there was no other way whereby the soul could come to God and have eternal life, save only through Christ, the blessed One, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life of the soul.

Christ, the Life of the soul

Chapter LIII

How Brother John of Alvernia, as he was saying Mass, fell down as one dead

TO the same Brother John in the aforesaid House of Moliano, according as was told by the brothers that were there present, there befell on a time this marvellous case. On the

Brother John's ecstasy

first night after the octave of Saint Lawrence, and within the octave of the Assumption of Our Lady, having said Matins in the church with the other brothers, and feeling the unction of the divine grace coming upon him, he went into the garden for to meditate on the Passion of Christ, and prepare himself devoutly to celebrate Mass, which it fell to him to sing that morning. And as he was meditating on the words of consecration of the Body of Christ, to wit, thinking upon the infinite love of Christ, whereby He willed not only to redeem us through His precious blood, but also to leave us for the food of our souls His most venerable Body and Blood, the love of the sweet Jesu began to grow in him with such fervour and such tenderness, that his soul might no more endure, for the sweetness that it felt; but he cried aloud, and as if drunken in spirit, ceased not to say within himself: "Hoc est corpus meum"; for as he spake these words he seemed to behold Christ, the blessed One, with the Virgin Mary and a great host of Angels, and was enlightened by the Holy Spirit in all the deep and lofty mysteries of that exalted Sacrament. And when it was dawn, he entered into the church with that same fervour of spirit and anxious thought, and the self same words upon his lips, not wotting that he was heard or seen of any man; but in the choir there was a certain brother at prayer, that saw and heard all. And in this fervour not being able to contain himself by reason of the fulness of the divine grace, he cried with a loud voice, and so continued until

it was time to say the Mass; wherefore he went to make himself ready for the altar. And when he had begun the Mass, the further he proceeded, the more did the love of Christ increase in him, and the fervour of devotion, wherewith was given unto him an unspeakable feeling of God, such as he himself knew not of, nor could thereafter tell forth with his tongue. Whereat fearing lest that fervour and feeling of God should so much increase that he needs must leave the Mass, he fell into much perplexity, and knew not what course to take, or to go on with the Mass, or to stand and wait. But for that the like case had befallen him on some other time, and the Lord had so tempered that fervour that there had been no need for him to leave the Mass; and trusting that this time too he might be able to do the same, with great fear he set himself to go on with the Mass, and went as far as the Preface of Our Lady, when the divine illumination and the gracious sweetness of the love of God began so much to grow within him, that coming to the *Qui pridie*, he could scarce endure such utter sweetness. Having come at length to the act of consecration, and having said one half of the words over the Host, to wit: "*Hoc est*," he could by no means proceed further, but only repeated the same words, to wit: "*Hoc est enim.*" And the reason wherefore he could proceed no further, was this, that he felt and saw the presence of Christ with a great company of Angels, whose majesty he was not able to endure; and he saw that Christ entered not into the Host.

He celebrates Mass

Christ appears to him

or that the Host was not changed into the body of Christ, until he should utter the other half of the words, to wit: "*corpus meum.*" Wherefore as he abode in this anxiety and could proceed no further, the guardian and the other brothers, and likewise many lay folk that were in the church for to hear Mass, drew near unto the altar: and were astonished to behold and see what things Brother John did: and many of them were weeping out of devotion. At the last, after long space, to wit, when so it pleased God, Brother John uttered the words: "*enim corpus meum*" in a loud voice; and straightway the form of the bread vanished, and in the Host appeared Jesu Christ, the blessed One, incarnate and glorified, and showed forth to him the humility and love, which made Him to become incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and which makes Him every day to come into the hands of the priest when he consecrates the Host: for the which cause he was the more lifted up in sweetness of contemplation. Wherefore when he had elevated the Host and the consecrated chalice, he was rapt out of himself: and his soul being lifted up above all bodily feelings, his body fell backwards; and if he had not been supported by the guardian, who stood behind him, he would have fallen on his back upon the ground. Whereat the brothers running up to him, and the lay folk, men and women, that were in the church, he was carried into the sacristy, as one dead, for his body was cold and the fingers of his hands were so tightly clenched that scarce could they at all be opened

or moved. And in this manner he lay as one half dead, or rapt away, even until Tierce, and it was summer time. And because I, who was there present, desired much to know what God had wrought in him, so soon as he had returned to himself again, I went to him and prayed him, for the love of God, to tell me all: wherefore, seeing that he trusted much in me, he told all unto me in order; and among other things, he said, that as he was contemplating the body and blood of Jesu Christ present before him, his heart was melted like wax before the fire, and his flesh seemed to be without bones, in such fashion that he scarce could lift his arms or hands for to make the sign of the cross over the Host or the chalice. Likewise he told me that or ever he was made priest, it had been revealed him of God that he would faint away during the Mass, but seeing that he had said many Masses, and this had not befallen him, he deemed that the revelation had not been of God. Nevertheless about fifty days before the Assumption of Our Lady, whereon the aforesaid hap befell him, it had been again revealed to him by God that this needs must come to pass about the said feast of the Assumption; but that he did not afterwards bear in mind the said vision, or revelation, made to him by our Lord.

He falls down as if dead

Of the most holy Stigmata of Saint Francis and reflections thereon

The Stigmata of St Francis

IN this part we shall gaze with devout reflection on the glorious and most holy Stigmata of our blessed Father, Saint Francis, the which he received of Christ on His holy mount of Alvernia. And for that the said Stigmata were five in number, after the manner of the wounds of our Lord Jesu Christ, therefore this treatise will contain five reflections.

The first reflection will be touching the manner in which Saint Francis came to the holy mount of Alvernia.

The second reflection will be touching the life that he lived, and the converse that he held with his companions on the said holy mount.

The third reflection will be touching the seraphic vision and the imprinting of the most holy Stigmata.

The fourth reflection will be of the manner in which Saint Francis came down from the mount of Alvernia, after that he had received the holy Stigmata, and returned to Saint Mary of the Angels.

The fifth reflection will be touching certain divine apparitions and revelations made after the death of Saint Francis unto holy brothers and other devout persons touching the said holy Stigmata.

Of the first reflection on the most holy Stigmata

As touching the first reflection, ye must needs know that Saint Francis, being forty and three years of age, in the year 1224, being inspired of God, set out from the Vale of Spoleto for to go into Romagna with Brother Leo his companion; and as they went, they passed by the foot of the Castle of Montefeltro; in the which Castle there was at that time a great company of gentle folk, and much feasting, by reason of the knighting of one of the same Counts of Montefeltro. And Saint Francis, hearing of the festivities that were holden there and how that many gentle folk of divers countries were there gathered together, spake unto Brother Leo: "Let us go up unto this feast, for with the help of God we may win some good fruit of souls." Among the other gentle folk from that country, that were of that knightly company, was a great and eke a wealthy gentleman of Tuscany, by name Orlando da Chiusi, of Casentino; who by reason of the marvellous things that he had heard of the sanctity and the miracles of Saint Francis, bore him great devotion, and felt an exceeding strong desire to see him and to hear him preach. Coming to the castle, Saint Francis entered in, and came to the courtyard where all that great company of gentle folk was gathered together, and in fervour of spirit stood up upon a parapet, and began to preach, taking as the text of his sermon these words in the vulgar tongue: Of the first reflection

> So great the joys I have in sight,
> That every sorrow brings delight;

St Francis preaches at Monte-feltro

and upon this text, as the Holy Spirit gave him utterance, he preached so devoutly and sublimely, citing as proof thereof the divers pains and martyrdoms of the holy Apostles and the holy Martyrs, and the hard penances of the holy Confessors, and the many tribulations and temptations of the holy Virgins and the other saints, that all the folk stood with their eyes and their minds turned towards him, and gave such heed as though it were an angel of God speaking: among the which the said Orlando, touched in the heart by God through the marvellous preaching of Saint Francis, set it in his heart to confer and to have speech with Saint Francis, after the sermon, touching the state of his soul. Therefore, when the preaching was done, he drew Saint Francis aside, and said unto him: "O father, I would confer with thee touching the salvation of my soul." Replied Saint Francis: "It pleaseth me right well; but go this morning and do honour to thy friends, who have called thee to the feast, and dine with them; and after thou hast dined, we will speak together as much as thou wilt." So Orlando gat him to the dinner: and after that he had dined, he returned to Saint Francis, and conferred with him, and set forth unto him fully the state of his soul. And at the end this, Orlando said to Saint Francis: "I have in Tuscany a mountain, most proper for devotion, the which is called the Mount of Alvernia, and is very lonely and right well fitted for whoso may wish to do penance in a place remote from men, or

whoso may desire to live a solitary life; if it should please thee, right willingly would I give it to thee and thy companions for the salvation of my soul." Saint Francis hearing this liberal offer of the thing that he so much desired, rejoiced with exceeding great joy; and praising and giving thanks first to God and then to Orlando, he spake thus: "Orlando, when you have returned to your house, I will send unto you certain of my companions and you shall show them that mountain; and if it shall seem to them well fitted for prayer and penitence, I accept your loving offer even now." And this said, Saint Francis departed: and when his journey was done, returned to Saint Mary of the Angels: and likewise Orlando, when the festivities of that knightly company were over, returned to his castle, which was called Chiusi, the which was but a mile distant from Alvernia. Whenas Saint Francis had returned to Saint Mary of the Angels, he sent two of his companions to the said Orlando; who when they were come to him, were received of him with exceeding great joy and charity. And desiring to show them the mount of Alvernia, he sent with them full fifty men-at-arms to defend them from the wild beasts of the wood, and thus accompanied these brothers climbed up the mountain and searched diligently; and at last they came to a part of the mountain that was well fitted for devotion and contemplation; for in that part there was some level ground; and this place they chose out for them and for Saint Francis to dwell therein;

The gift of the Mount of Alvernia

The Mount taken possession of

and with the help of the men-at-arms that bore them company, they made a little cell of branches of trees: and so they accepted in the name of God, and took possession of the mount of Alvernia and of the dwelling-place of the brothers on the mountain, and departed, and returned to Saint Francis. And when they were come unto him, they told him how and in what manner they had taken a place on the mount of Alvernia, most fitted for prayer and meditation. Hearing these tidings, Saint Francis was right glad, and praising and giving thanks to God, he spake to those brothers with joyful countenance, and said: "My sons, our forty days' fast of Saint Michael the Archangel draweth near: I firmly believe that it is the will of God that we keep this fast on the mount of Alvernia, which by divine decree hath been made ready for us, to the end that to the honour and glory of God and of His Mother, the glorious Virgin Mary, and of the holy Angels, we may, through penance, merit at the hands of Christ the consolation of consecrating this blessed mountain." And thus saying, Saint Francis took with him Brother Masseo da Marignano of Assisi, the which was a man of great eloquence; and Brother Angelo Tancredi da Rieti, the which was a man of very gentle birth and in the world had been a knight; and Brother Leo, a man of exceeding great simplicity and purity, for the which cause Saint Francis loved him much. And with these three brothers Saint Francis set himself to pray, commended himself and his companions aforesaid to

the prayers of the brothers that remained behind, and set out with those three in the name of Jesu Christ, the Crucified, for to go to the mount of Alvernia. And as he went, Saint Francis called unto one of those three companions, to wit, Brother Masseo, and said unto him: "Thou shalt be our guardian and our superior in this journey, to wit, so long as we be going and staying together, and we will observe our rule, to wit, that we be either saying the office, or speaking of God, or keeping silence, and that we take no thought beforehand, either of eating or drinking or sleeping: but when it is time to seek a lodging, we will beg a little bread, and stay and rest in the place that God may make ready for us." Then the three companions bowed their heads, and making the sign of the cross, went on their way: and on the first night they came to a house of the brothers and lodged there. On the second night, by reason of the bad weather and because they were tired, not being able to reach any house of the brothers or any castle or village, when the night overtook them and bad weather, they took refuge in a deserted and dismantled church, and there laid them down to rest. And while his companions slept, Saint Francis threw himself on his knees to pray; and behold in the first watch of the night there come a great multitude of demons, exceeding fierce, with a great noise and tumult, and began to do him grievous battle and annoy; whereby the one plucked him this way and the other that; one dragged him up and another

St Francis sets out

He is assaulted by demons

down; one threatened him with one thing, and the other accused him of another; and thus in divers manners they sought to distract him from his prayer; but they could not, for that God was with him. Therefore whenas Saint Francis had enough endured the assaults of the demons, he began to cry in a loud voice: "O damned spirits, ye can do naught, save what the hand of God alloweth you: wherefore in the name of God Almighty I bid you do unto my body whatever is permitted you of God; for gladly shall I bear it, sith I have no greater enemy than my body: and therefore if you avenge me of mine enemy, ye will do me good service." Then the demons with great fury and violence took hold of him, and began to drag him through the church, and to do him greater trouble and annoy than at the first. Thereat Saint Francis began to cry aloud, and said: "My Lord Jesu Christ, I give Thee thanks for the so great honour and charity that Thou showest me; for it is a token of great love when the Lord punishes His servant for all his faults in this world, so that he be not punished in the next. And I am ready gladly to endure every pain and adversity, that Thou, my God, dost will to send me for my sins." Then the demons, put to confusion and vanquished by his patience and endurance, were away. And Saint Francis in fervour of spirit left the church and entered into a wood that was there hard by, and threw himself upon his knees in prayer; and with prayers and tears and beating of the breast he sought to find

Jesu Christ, the spouse and the delight of his soul. He passes the night in prayer

And at the last finding Him in the secret places of his soul, he now bespake him with reverence as his Lord: now made answer to Him as his judge; now besought Him as his father; now held converse with Him as with a friend. On that night within the wood, his companions, sith they were awake and were come to hear and mark what he did, saw and heard him, with tears and cries, devoutly beseeching God to have mercy upon sinners. Then was he seen and heard to weep with a loud voice over the Passion of Christ, as though he saw it with his own eyes. On that self same night they beheld him praying with his arms stretched out in the form of a cross, for a great space uplifted and floating above the earth, and surrounded by a cloud of glory. And so in such holy exercises he passed the whole night through without sleep. And thereafter in the morning, his companions, being ware that through the fatigues of the night, which he had passed without sleep, Saint Francis was much weakened in body and could but ill go on his way afoot, went to a poor peasant of those parts, and begged him, for the love of God, to lend his ass for Brother Francis, their Father, that could not go afoot. Hearing them make mention of Brother Francis, he asked them: "Are ye of the brethren of that brother of Assisi, of whom so much good is spoken?" The brothers answered: "Yes," and that in very sooth it was for him that they asked for the sumpter beast.

His humility

Then the good man, with great diligence and devotion, made ready the ass, and brought it to Saint Francis, and with great reverence let mount him thereon, and they went on their way; and he with them, behind his ass. And when they had gone on a little way, the peasant said to Saint Francis: "Tell me, art thou Brother Francis of Assisi?" Replied Saint Francis: "Yes." "Try then," said the peasant, "to be as good as thou art of all folk held to be, seeing that many have great faith in thee; and therefore, I admonish thee that in thee there be naught save what men hope to find therein." Hearing these words, Saint Francis thought no scorn to be admonished by a peasant, nor said within himself: "What beast is this doth admonish me?" as many would say now-a-days, that wear the cowl; but straightway he threw himself from off the ass upon the ground, and kneeled him down before him, and kissed his feet; and thus humbly thanked him for that he had deigned thus lovingly to admonish him. Then the peasant, together with the companions of Saint Francis, with great devotion lifted him from the ground and set him on the ass again, and they went on their way. And when that they were come about half way up the mountain, as the heat was very great and the ascent was weary, the peasant became very thirsty, in such sort that he began to cry aloud behind Saint Francis, saying: "Woe is me, for I die of thirst: if I find not something to drink, I shall choke outright." Wherefore Saint Francis got down off the ass and fell on his knees in prayer; and re-

mained so long kneeling with his hands lifted up to heaven, until he knew by revelation that God had heard his prayer. Then said Saint Francis to the peasant: "Run quickly to that rock, and there shalt thou find the living water, which Jesu Christ in this hour, of His mercy, hath made to come forth from out that rock." So he ran to the place that Saint Francis had shown him, and found a fair spring that had been brought out of the hard rock by virtue of the prayer of Saint Francis: and he drank his fill thereof and was comforted. And it doth well appear that this spring was brought out by God in miraculous fashion at the prayers of Saint Francis, seeing that neither before nor after was there ever seen in that place a spring of water, nor any living water near to that place for a great space round. This done, Saint Francis with his companions and the peasant gave thanks unto God for the miracle shown forth to them, and then went they on their way. And as they drew near to the foot of the rock of Alvernia itself, it pleased Saint Francis to rest a little under the oak that was by the way, and is there to this day; and as he stood under it, Saint Francis began to take note of the situation of the place and of the country round. And as he was thus gazing, lo! there came a great multitude of birds from divers parts, the which, with singing and flapping of their wings, all showed joy and gladness exceeding great, and came about Saint Francis in such fashion that some settled on his head, some on his shoulders, and some on his arms, some in his lap, and some

The miracle of the water

St Francis and companions reach Alvernia

round his feet. When his companions and the peasant marvelled, beholding this, Saint Francis, all joyful in spirit, spake thus unto them: "I believe, brothers most dear, that it is pleasing unto our Lord Jesu Christ that we should dwell in this lonely mountain, seeing that our little sisters and brothers the birds show such joy at our coming." And said these words, they arose, and went on their way and came at last to the place that his companions had first chosen. And this is touching the first reflection, to wit, how Saint Francis came to the holy mount of Alvernia.

Of the second reflection on the most holy Stigmata

The second reflection is on the sojourning of Saint Francis with his companions on the said mount of Alvernia. And as to this, ye must know that Orlando, hearing that Saint Francis with three companions had climbed up the mount of Alvernia, for to dwell there, rejoiced with exceeding great joy, and on the following day set out with many of the folk of his castle, and came to visit Saint Francis, bringing with him bread and wine and other victuals, for him and his companions; and being come there, he found them at prayer; and drawing near unto them, saluted them. Then Saint Francis arose, and with great love and gladness gave welcome to Orlando and his company; and this done, they sat them down to have speech of each other. And after they had somewhat spoken together, and Saint Francis had given him

thanks for the holy mountain that he had given him, and for his coming thither, he besought him that he would let build a poor little cell at the foot of a fair beech tree, the which was a stone's throw from the place where the brothers lived, for that place seemed to him very fit and hallowed for prayer. And straightway Orlando let build it; and this done, as it was drawing near unto evening and it was time for them to depart, Saint Francis preached unto them a little, before they took leave of him; and when he had preached unto them and given them his blessing, Orlando, finding he must needs depart, called Saint Francis and his companions aside, and said unto them: "My brothers most dear, I would not have you suffer any bodily want in this wild mountain, whereby you might the less be able to give heed to spiritual things: and therefore I desire, and this I say to you for once, for all, that ye securely send to my house for whatsoe'er ye need, and if ye do otherwise, I shall take it ill of you." And this said, he departed with his company and returned to his castle. Then Saint Francis made his companions to sit down and taught them what manner of life they ought to lead, both they and whoso desireth to live the religious life in a hermitage. And among other things, he straitly laid on them the observance of holy poverty, saying: "Take not such heed unto the charitable offer of Orlando, lest ye in any thing offend our Lady and Madonna, holy poverty. Be ye sure that the more we despise poverty, the more will the world despise us, and the more shall we

The observance of holy poverty

Poverty, the pledge of eternal riches

suffer want; but if we cling to holy poverty with a close embrace, the whole world will follow after us and will abundantly provide for us. God hath called us into this holy Order for the salvation of the world, and hath made this pact between us and the world, that we give unto the world a good example and the world make provision for our needs. Let us then persevere in holy poverty, seeing that this is the way of perfectness and is an earnest and pledge of eternal riches." And after many beautiful and holy words and admonishments on this matter, he ended by saying: "This is the manner of life that I lay upon myself and upon you; and sith I see that I draw near unto death, I am minded to be solitary, and to take refuge with God, and to bewail my sins before Him; and Brother Leo, when it seemeth to him good, shall bring to me a little bread and a little water; and do ye in no wise suffer any that be of the world to come nigh me, but do ye answer them for me." And said these words, he gave them his blessing and went to his cell under the beech tree, and his companions remained in their own place, with firm purpose to do the bidding of Saint Francis. A few days thereafter, as Saint Francis was standing hard by the said cell, pondering on the form of the mountain, and marvelling at the huge clefts and openings in the mighty rocks, he set himself to pray: and then it was revealed to him of God that those marvellous clefts had been miraculously made in the hour of the Passion of Christ, when, as saith the Evangelist, the rocks were rent

asunder. And it was the will of God that this should in especial manner be made manifest upon that mount of Alvernia, for that there the Passion of our Lord Jesu Christ should be renewed in his soul through love and pity, and in his body through the imprinting of the most holy Stigmata. So soon as he had received this revelation, straightway Saint Francis shut himself up in his cell and was wholly wrapped within himself, and set himself to pay heed unto the mystery of that revelation. And from that time forth Saint Francis, through unceasing prayer, began more oft to taste the sweetness of divine contemplation, whereby he oftentimes was rapt in God, so that he was seen by his companions to be lifted bodily from off the ground, and altogether taken out of himself. In these raptures of contemplation, there were revealed to him of God not only things present and to come, but also the secret thoughts and desires of the brothers, even as Brother Leo, his companion, had proof thereof in himself that day. The which Brother Leo being assailed by the devil with a grievous temptation, not of the flesh but of the spirit, there came to him a great desire to have some devout sentence written by the hand of Saint Francis, for he thought that if he had it, that temptation would leave him, or wholly, or in part. Having this desire, yet for shame and reverence sake he dared not tell it to Saint Francis: but what Brother Leo told him not, that did the Holy Spirit reveal. Wherefore Saint Francis called him unto him, and made him bring ink-pot and

St Francis receives revelations

Brother Leo's temptation

pen and paper: and with his own hand wrote the praises of Christ, even as the brother had desired; and at the end he made the sign Tau, and gave it to him, saying: "Take this paper, dear brother, and keep it diligently until thy death. May God bless thee and guard thee against all temptation. Be not downcast, because thou hast temptations; for at such time I deem thee a friend and a better servant of God, and the more thou art assailed by temptations, the more do I love thee. Verily I say unto thee that no man should deem himself a true friend of God, save in so far as he hath passed through many temptations and tribulations." When Brother Leo took this writing with great devotion and faith, straightway all his temptation left him; and returning to his own place, he told his companions, with great joy, what grace God had shown unto him when he took the writing from Saint Francis; and putting it aside and taking diligent care thereof, the brothers afterwards worked many miracles by its means. And from that hour forth, the said Brother Leo with great purity and with good intention began to keep watch upon and to observe the life of Saint Francis: and for his purity's sake, he merited to see Saint Francis full many and many a time rapt in God and uplifted from the earth, at one time to the height of three cubits, at another to that of four, at another to the height of the beech tree: and at another time he beheld him lifted up in the air so high, and surrounded with such splendour, that he scarce could see him.

And what did this simple brother do, when Saint Francis was uplifted from the earth but a little way, so that he could reach him? He went softly to him and embraced his feet and kissed them, and spake with tears: "My God, have mercy on me a sinner, and through the merits of this holy man grant me to find Thy grace." And one time among others, as thus he stood beneath the feet of Saint Francis when he was lifted up so far that he could not touch him, he saw a scroll written in letters of gold come down from heaven, and rest on the head of Saint Francis, and on the scroll were written these words: "Here is the grace of God"; and after that he had read it, he saw it return to heaven. Through the gift of that grace of God that was in him, Saint Francis was not only rapt in God in ecstatic contemplation, but also at sundry times comforted by the visitation of angels. Thus, as Saint Francis was one day thinking on his death and of the state of his Order when his life was done, and saying: "O Lord God, what will become of Thy poor little family after my death, the which of Thy goodness Thou hast entrusted to me a sinner? who will pray to Thee for them?" and other such words, there appeared unto him an Angel sent by God, and comforted him, saying: "I tell thee in the name of God, that the profession of the Order will never fail until the Day of Judgment, and there will be no sinner so great as not to find mercy with God, if with his whole heart he love thine Order; and none shall live long, that of malice

St Francis visited by angels

The stability of the Order assured

persecutes thy Order. Moreover no very wicked person within thy Order, that does not amend his life, will be able to remain long in the Order. Wherefore grieve not thyself, if in thine Order thou see certain that be not good brothers and do not observe the Rule as they ought, and think not that thereby this Order will decline; for always a many shall be found therein that will perfectly observe the Gospel life of Christ and the purity of the Rule; and all such, immediately after the death of the body, shall go into life eternal without passing at all through Purgatory; some will observe it, but not perfectly, and these before they go to Paradise, will be in Purgatory, but the time of their purification shall be left by God to thee. But of him that observes not the Rule at all, do thou take no heed, saith God, for of such He Himself taketh no heed." And said these words, the Angel was away, and Saint Francis remained comforted and consoled. Thereafter, as the feast of the Assumption of Our Lady drew near, Saint Francis sought how he might find a place more solitary and secret, wherein he might the more solitary keep the forty days' fast of Saint Michael the Archangel, which beginneth with the said feast of the Assumption. Wherefore he called unto him Brother Leo, and said: "Go and stand in the doorway of the oratory where the brothers lodge, and when I call thee, return to me again." So Brother Leo went; and stood in the doorway; and Saint Francis withdrew himself a little space, and called aloud.

Hearing him call, Brother Leo returned to him again; and Saint Francis said to him: "Son, let us seek for another more secret place, where thou canst not thuswise hear me when I call." The forty days' fast

And as they searched, they found on the side of the mountain that looked towards the south, a lonely place and very proper for his purpose; but they could not win there; because in front there was a horrible and fearful cleft in a huge rock; wherefore with great pains they laid a piece of wood over it as a bridge and got across to the other side. Then Saint Francis sent for the other brothers and told them how he was minded to keep the forty days' fast of Saint Michael in that lonely place; and therefore he besought them to make him a little cell there, so that no cry of his could be heard by them. And when the cell was made, Saint Francis said to them: "Go ye to your own place, and leave me here alone, for, with the help of God, I am minded to keep the fast here, without disturbance or distraction, and therefore let none of you come unto me, nor suffer any lay folk to come to me. But, Brother Leo, thou alone shalt come to me, once a day, with a little bread and water, and at night once again at the hour of Matins; and then shalt thou come to me in silence, and when thou art at the bridge-head, thou shalt say: "*Domine, labia mea aperies*"; and if I answer thee, cross over and come to the cell, and we will say Matins together; and if I answer thee not, then depart straightway." And this Saint Francis said because at certain times

St Francis assaulted by demons

he had been so rapt in God, that he nor heard nor felt aught with the bodily senses. And this said, Saint Francis gave them his blessing; and they went back again to their own place. And the feast of the Assumption being now come, Saint Francis began the holy fast with great abstinence and severity, mortifying his body and comforting his spirit with fervent prayers, vigils, and scourgings; and in these prayers ever growing from virtue to virtue he made ready his soul to receive the divine mysteries and the divine splendours, and his body to endure the cruel assaults of the demons, with whom he oftentimes fought in sensible form; and among others, it befell on a time during that fast, that Saint Francis leaving his cell one day in fervour of spirit and going aside a little to pray in a hollow of the rock, from the which down to the ground is an exceeding deep descent and a horrible and fearful precipice,—suddenly the devil came in terrible shape, with a tempest and exceeding loud roar, and struck at him for to push him down thence. Saint Francis, not having where to flee, and not being able to endure the grim aspect of the demon, he turned him quickly with hands and face and all his body pressed to the rock, commending himself to God, and groping with his hands, if perchance he might find aught to cling to. But as it pleased God, who suffereth not His servants to be tempted above that they are able to bear, suddenly by a miracle the rock to which he clung hollowed itself out in fashion as the shape of his body,

and so received him into itself, and like as if he had put his hands and face in melted wax, even so was the form of the face and hands of Saint Francis imprinted on the rock; and thuswise helped of God he escaped out of the hands of the demon. But that which the demon could not then do unto Saint Francis, to wit, push him down thence, he did a good while after the death of Saint Francis, unto one of his dear and pious brothers, who was setting in order some pieces of wood in the selfsame place, to the end that it might be possible to win there without peril, out of devotion to Saint Francis and the miracle that was wrought there; on a day the demon pushed him, while he had on his head a great log that he wished to set there, and made him fall down thence with the log upon his head. But God that had preserved and delivered Saint Francis from falling, through his merits delivered and preserved his pious brother from the peril of his fall: for the brother, as he fell, with exceeding great devotion commended himself in a loud voice unto Saint Francis; and straightway he appeared unto him, and catching him, set him down upon the rocks, without suffering him to feel or shock or any hurt. Then the other brothers having heard his cry as he fell, and deeming him dead and dashed in pieces by reason of his fall from such a height upon the sharp rocks, with great sorrow and weeping took up the bier and came from the other side of the mountain for to gather up the fragments of his body and bury them. When they were now

The miracle of the rock

The tame falcon

come down from the mountain, that brother that had fallen met them with the log upon his head wherewith he had fallen, and he was singing *Te Deum laudamus* in a loud voice. And the brothers marvelling exceedingly, he told unto them in order all the manner of his falling and how Saint Francis had delivered him from all peril. Then all the brothers went with him to the place, singing most devoutly the aforesaid psalm, *Te Deum laudamus*, and praising and giving thanks to God and to Saint Francis for the miracle that He had wrought upon their brother. Now while Saint Francis was keeping the aforesaid fast, as hath been set forth above, albeit he suffered many assaults of the evil one, nevertheless he received of God much consolation, not only through the visits of angels, but also through the birds of the wood. For during all the time of that fast, a falcon, that was building her nest hard by his cell, woke him every night a little before Matins, with her singing and the beating of her wings against the cell, and went not away until he rose up to say Matins; and when perchance Saint Francis was at one time more wearied than at another, or sickly or weak, this falcon, like a discreet person and pitiful, would sing her song later. And so Saint Francis had great joy of this clock; for the great carefulness of the falcon kept far from him all idleness, and spurred him on to pray; and beyond all this, she would sometimes in the day-time sit quite tamely by him. Finally, as touching this second reflection, Saint Francis being much weakened

in body through his sharp abstinence, and through the assaults of the devil, and desiring to comfort the body with the spiritual food of the soul, began to think on the immeasurable glory and joy of the blessed in the life eternal; and therewithal began to pray God to grant him the grace of tasting a little of that joy. And as he continued in this thought, suddenly there appeared unto him an Angel with exceeding great splendour, having a viol in his left hand and in his right the bow; and as Saint Francis stood all amazed at the sight of him, the Angel drew the bow once across the viol; and straightway Saint Francis was ware of such sweet melody that his soul melted away for very sweetness and was lifted up above all bodily feeling; insomuch that, as he afterwards told his companions, he doubted that, if the Angel had drawn the bow a second time across the strings, his mind would have left his body for the all too utter sweetness thereof. And this touching the second reflection. **The heavenly melody**

Of the third reflection on the most holy Stigmata

Coming to the third reflection, to wit, on the seraphic vision and the imprinting of the most holy Stigmata, ye must needs know, that as the time of the feast of the most holy Cross drew near, in the month of September, one night Brother Leo went to the wonted place and at the wonted hour for to say Matins with Saint Francis; and when he said *Domine, labia*

A torch of flame descends from heaven

mea aperies from the bridge-head as was his wont, and Saint Francis made no answer, Brother Leo did not go back again, as Saint Francis had given him commandment; but with a good and holy intention, he crossed the bridge and entered softly into his cell, and not finding him, he thought that he might be praying somewhere in the wood: wherefore he came out again, and by the light of the moon went softly searching through the wood: and at last he heard the voice of Saint Francis, and, drawing near, saw him on his knees in prayer, with face and hands raised up to Heaven; and in fervour of spirit he was saying: "Who art thou, O most sweet my God? What am I, most vile worm and Thine unprofitable servant?" And these selfsame words he said again and again, and spake no word beside. For the which cause Brother Leo, marvelling thereat, lifted up his eyes unto heaven; and as he looked, he saw coming down from heaven a torch of flame exceeding beautiful and bright, which, descending, rested on the head of Saint Francis: and out of the flame there came a voice that spake with Saint Francis, but Brother Leo could not understand the words. Hearing this, and deeming himself unworthy to stand so close to the holy place where that wondrous apparition was revealed, and fearing moreover to offend Saint Francis and disturb him in his contemplation, if perchance he should perceive him, he softly drew back, and standing afar off, waited to see the end: and gazing with eyes fixed, he saw Saint Francis stretch out his hands three times

to the flame: and at the last after long space of time he saw the flame return to heaven. So, gladdened by the vision, he softly turned away for to go to his cell again. And as he was going softly, deeming himself unseen, Saint Francis was aware of him by the rustling of the leaves beneath his feet, and bade him wait for him, and not to move. Then Brother Leo, obedient, stood still and waited with such fear that, as he afterwards told his companions, at that moment he would rather that the earth had swallowed him up than wait for Saint Francis, who he thought would be displeased with him: for with great diligence he took heed not to offend his father, lest for his fault Saint Francis might deprive him of his company. Then Saint Francis coming up to him, asked him: "Who art thou?" And Brother Leo all trembling answered: "I am Brother Leo, my father." And Saint Francis said unto him: "Wherefore art thou come hither, brother little sheep? have I not told thee not to come watching me? Tell me by holy obedience whether thou hast seen or heard aught." Replied Brother Leo: "Father, I heard thee speak, and say several times: Who art thou, O most sweet my God? What am I, most vile worm and Thine unprofitable servant?" Then Brother Leo, kneeling down before Saint Francis, confessed the fault of disobedience that he had committed against his bidding, and besought his pardon with many tears. And thereafter he devoutly prayed him to interpret unto him the words that he had heard, and to tell him what

Brother Leo's disobedience

The two lights

were those that he had not understood. Then Saint Francis seeing that God had revealed unto the humble Brother Leo, or had permitted him to hear and see certain things, for his simplicity and purity's sake, deigned to reveal and interpret unto him that which he had asked; and he spake thus: "Know, brother little sheep of God, that when I spake the words that thou didst hear, then were shown to my soul two lights, the one of the knowledge and understanding of myself, the other of the knowledge and understanding of the Creator. When I said: Who art thou, O most sweet my God? then was I in a light of contemplation, in the which I saw the lamentable depth of my own vileness and misery; and therefore I said: Who art thou, Lord of infinite goodness and wisdom, that dost deign to visit me, that am a vile worm and abominable? And in the flame that thou sawest, was God: who spake in such manner unto me, even as in old time He had spoken unto Moses. And among the other things that he said unto me, He asked me to give Him three gifts; and I answered Him: My Lord, I am wholly Thine: Thou knowest well, that I have naught else save the tunic and the cord and the breeches, and even these three things are thine; what then can I offer and present to Thy Majesty? Then God said unto me: Search in thy bosom and give me what thou findest there. So I searched and found a ball of gold; and I offered it to God; and so did I three times, as God three times gave me commandment: and then I kneeled down

three times, and blessed and gave thanks unto God, that had given me what to offer unto Him. And straightway it was given me to understand, that the meaning of these three offerings was holy obedience, most high poverty, and glorious chastity, the which God by His grace hath granted me to observe so perfectly that in naught doth my conscience reprove me. And even as thou didst see me put my hands into my bosom and offer to God these three virtues signified under the form of the three balls of gold, which God had put into my bosom; even so hath God given me virtue within my soul, that for all the benefits and all the graces that He hath granted me of His most holy goodness, I alway praise and magnify Him with my heart and lips. These are the words that thou didst hear when I lifted up my hand three times, as thou sawest. But take heed, brother little sheep, that thou come not watching me, but return to thy cell with the blessing of God, and do thou have a tender care of me; for a few days hence God will do so great things in this mountain that all the world will marvel; sith He will perform certain new things, the which He hath never done unto any creature in this world." And said these words, he bade him bring the book of the Gospels; for God had put it into his soul that by the opening of the book of the Gospels three times, it would be revealed to him what it was the will of God to do with him. And when the book was brought, Saint Francis threw himself on his knees in prayer: when he had

The three offerings

The Angel of God appears to St Francis

done praying, he let open the book three times by the hand of Brother Leo, in the name of the most holy Trinity; and as it pleased the divine providence, on each of those three times there appeared before him the passion of Christ. For the which cause it was given him to understand that even as he had followed Christ in the acts of his life, so ought he to follow Him and be conformed to Him in His afflictions and sorrows and in His passion, before he passed away from this life. And from that time forth, Saint Francis began more plenteously to taste and feel the sweetness of divine contemplation and of the divine visitings. Among the which he had one that was an immediate preparation for the imprinting of the most holy Stigmata, and it was after this manner. On the day before the feast of the most holy Cross, in the month of September, as Saint Francis was praying in secret in his cell, there appeared unto him the Angel of God, and bespake him in the name of God: "I am come to comfort and admonish thee, that thou make thyself ready and set thyself in order, humbly with all patience to receive whatsoever God will give to thee and work in thee." Replied Saint Francis: "I am ready to endure with patience all things whatsoever my Lord may will to do unto me": and this said, the angel was away. So the next day came, to wit, the day of the most holy Cross: and early in the morning before dawn, Saint Francis fell on his knees in prayer in front of the entrance to his cell, and turning his face towards the East, prayed in this

manner: "Oh my Lord Jesu Christ, I pray Thee grant me two graces, before I die: the first, that in my life-time I may feel in my soul and in my body, so far as may be, the pain that Thou, sweet Lord, didst bear in the hour of Thy most bitter passion; the second is, that I may feel in my heart, as far as may be, that exceeding love, wherewith Thou, O Son of God, wast kindled to willingly endure such agony for us sinners." And as he thus continued a long time in prayer, he came to know that God would hear him and that as far as was possible for the mere creature, so far would it be granted him to feel the things aforesaid. Having this promise, Saint Francis began with exceeding great devotion to contemplate the passion of Christ and His infinite love: and the fervour of devotion so grew in him that he was altogether transformed into Jesu through love and pity. And as he was thuswise set on fire in this contemplation, on that same morn he saw descend from heaven a Seraph with six wings resplendent and aflame, and as with swift flight the Seraph drew nigh unto Saint Francis, so that he could discern him, he clearly saw that he bore in him the image of a man crucified: and his wings were in such guise displayed, that two wings were spread above his head, two were spread out to fly, and the other twain covered all his body. Seeing this, Saint Francis was sore adread, and was filled at once with joy and grief and marvel. He felt exceeding joy at the gracious look of Christ, who appeared to him so lovingly, and gazed on him so graciously: but on

The heavenly vision

The burning mountain

the other hand, seeing him crucified upon the cross, he felt immeasurable grief for pity's sake. Therewith, he marvelled much at so amazing and unwonted a vision, knowing full well that the weakness of the Passion agreeth not with the immortality of the seraphic spirit. And as he thus marvelled, it was revealed by Him that appeared to him: that by divine providence this vision had been shown in such form, to the end that he might understand that not by the martyrdom of the body, but by the enkindling of his mind, must he needs be wholly transformed into the express image of Christ Crucified, in that wondrous apparition. Then the whole mount of Alvernia appeared as though it burned with bright-shining flames, that lit up all the mountains and valleys round as though it had been the sun upon the earth; whereby the shepherds, that were keeping watch in those parts, seeing the mountain aflame and so great a light around, had exceeding great fear, according as they afterwards told unto the brothers, declaring that this flame rested upon the mount of Alvernia for the space of an hour and more. In like manner, at the bright shining of this light, which through the windows lit up the hostels of the country round, certain muleteers that were going into Romagna, arose, believing that the day had dawned, and saddled and laded their beasts: and going on their way, they saw the said light die out and the material sun arise. In the said seraphic apparition, Christ, the which appeared to him, spake to Saint Francis certain high and secret things, the

which Saint Francis in his life-time desired not to reveal to any man: but after his life was done, he did reveal them, as is set forth below; and the words were these: "Knowest thou," said Christ, "what it is that I have done unto thee? I have given thee the Stigmata, that are the signs of my passion, to the end that thou mayest be my standard-bearer. And even as on the day of my death I descended into hell and brought out thence all the souls that I found there by virtue of these my Stigmata: even so do I grant to thee that every year on the day of thy death thou shalt go to Purgatory, and in virtue of thy Stigmata shalt bring out thence all the souls of thy three Orders, to wit, Minors, Sisters, and Continents, and likewise others that shall have had a great devotion unto thee, and shalt lead them unto the glory of Paradise, to the end that thou mayest be conformed to me in death, as thou art in life." Then this marvellous vision vanishing away, after long space and secret converse, left in the heart of Saint Francis an exceeding ardour and flame of love divine: and in his flesh a marvellous image and copy of the passion of Christ. For straightway in the hands and feet of Saint Francis began to appear the marks of the nails, in such wise as he had seen them in the body of Jesu Christ, the Crucified, the which had shown Himself to him in the likeness of a seraph: and thus his hands and feet appeared to be pierced through the middle with nails, and the heads of them were in the palms of his hands and the soles of his feet outside the flesh, and

St Francis imprinted with the Stigmata

He seeks counsel of his friends

their points came out on the back of his hands and of his feet, so that they seemed bent back and rivetted in such fashion that under the bend and rivetting, which all stood out above the flesh, might easily be put a finger of the hand, as in a ring: and the heads of the nails were round and black. Likewise in the right side appeared an image of a wound made by a lance, unhealed, and red and bleeding, the which afterwards ofttimes dropped blood from the sacred breast of Saint Francis, and stained with blood his tunic and his hose. Wherefore his companions, before they knew it of his own lips, perceiving nevertheless that he uncovered not his hands and feet, and that he could not put the soles of his feet to the ground; and afterwards finding his tunic and his hose all stained with blood, what time they washed them, knew of a surety that in his hands and feet and likewise in his side he bore the express image and similitude of our Lord Jesu Christ Crucified. And albeit he sought carefully to hide and to conceal those glorious and most holy Stigmata, so clearly imprinted on his flesh: and sith on the other hand he saw that he could ill conceal them from his own familiar friends: yet feared to spread abroad the secrets of God, he stood in much doubt if best it were to reveal the seraphic vision, the imprinting of the most holy Stigmata. At length through the pricking of conscience, he called unto him certain of his companions that were his more familiar friends, and setting forth unto them his doubt in general terms, without

making mention of the actual fact, he asked their counsel. Now among these brothers there was one of great sanctity, whose name was Brother Illuminato: he being truly illumined of God, understanding that Saint Francis must needs have seen some marvellous thing, answered him: "Brother Francis, know that not for thyself alone, but also for others' sake, hath God at sundry times revealed to thee His holy mysteries; wherefore thou hast good reason for to fear, that, if thou keep secret what God hath shown thee for the benefit of others, thou mayest be held worthy of blame." Then Saint Francis moved by these words, with exceeding great fear told unto them all the manner and the form of the vision set forth above; adding that Christ, the which had appeared to him, had given him certain things that he would never tell, so long as he lived. And albeit those most holy wounds, inasmuch as Christ had imprinted them, gave to his heart exceeding joy: nathless to his flesh and the senses of his body, they gave pain unbearable. So that, constrained by necessity, he chose out Brother Leo, as above the rest the most simple and most pure, and to him he revealed the whole, and suffered him to see and touch those holy wounds, and swathe them in bands to assuage the pain, and to receive the blood that trickled from the said wounds; the which bands, in time of sickness, he suffered him to change often, and even every day, save from Thursday evening until Saturday morning; because during that time he would not that the pain of the

He tells of his vision

He departs from the mountain

passion of Christ, which he bore in his body, should a whit be lessened by any human medicine or remedy; for at that time our Saviour Jesu Christ had been for our sakes taken and was crucified, dead and buried. It befell on a time that as Brother Leo was changing the bandage of the wound in the side, Saint Francis, for the pain that he felt when the blood-stained bandages were loosed, laid his hand upon the breast of Brother Leo; and at the touch of those holy hands, Brother Leo felt such sweetness of devotion in his heart, that he well-nigh fell upon the ground half-dead. And at the last, touching this third reflection, Saint Francis having ended the forty days' fast of Saint Michael the Archangel, set himself by divine revelation to return to Saint Mary of the Angels. Wherefore he called unto him Brother Masseo and Brother Angelo; and after many words and holy admonishments, commended that holy mountain into their charge with what earnestness he might, saying that as for himself it behoved him with Brother Leo to return to Saint Mary of the Angels. And this said, he took leave of them and blessed them in the name of Jesu Crucified, and yielding to their prayers, he stretched out to them his most holy hands adorned with those glorious and sacred Stigmata, to see, to touch, and kiss: and so leaving them comforted, he departed from them and went down from the holy mountain.

Of the fourth reflection on the most holy Stigmata

The fame of his sanctity

As to the fourth reflection, ye must know that after the true love of Christ had perfectly transformed Saint Francis in God and in the true image of Christ Crucified, having finished the fast of forty days in honour of Saint Michael the Archangel, upon the holy mount of Alvernia; after the feast of Saint Michael, that angel-like man, Saint Francis, came down from the mountain, with Brother Leo and a devout peasant, on whose ass he sat, sith by reason of the nails in his feet he could ill go afoot. When therefore Saint Francis had come down from the mountain, the fame of his sanctity was noised already throughout the country, and the shepherds had spread it abroad how they had seen the mount of Alvernia all aflame, and how that this was the sign of some great miracle that God had wrought upon Saint Francis; so the people of the parts through which he passed, all came out to meet him, both men and women, small and great: and they all, with great devotion and desire, sought to touch him and to kiss his hands; and he not being able to escape the devotion of the people, albeit he had bound up the palms of his hands, yet the better to hide the most holy Stigmata, he bound them up still more and covered them with his sleeves and gave them only the fingers to kiss. But for all his pains to hide and to conceal the mystery of the most holy Stigmata, to avoid all occasion of worldly glory, it pleased God for His own glory to show forth many miracles, by virtue

He works miracles

of the said most holy Stigmata; and above all in that journey from Alvernia to Saint Mary of the Angels; as well as very many thereafter in divers parts of the world, in his life-time and after his glorious death; to the end that their hidden and marvellous virtue, and the exceeding love and mercy of Christ towards him in His marvellous gift of them, might be shown forth to the world, through clear and evident miracles; whereof we will set forth certain in this place. Now at that time as Saint Francis was drawing nigh to a village that was on the borders of the county of Arezzo, there came to meet him a woman, weeping bitterly, with her son in her arms, the which was eight years old and had had the dropsy four years; and his body was so terribly swollen that, when he stood upright he could not see his feet; and this woman laid her son down before him, and besought him that he would pray to God for him. Then Saint Francis first set himself to pray, and then, done the prayer, laid his holy hands on the body of the child, and straightway all the swelling was allayed, and he was made every whit whole, and he gave him back to his mother, who receiving him with exceeding great joy and taking him home again, gave thanks to God and to Saint Francis, and willingly showed her son that was healed to all of that country that came to her house for to see him. The self-same day Saint Francis passed through Borgo San Sepolcro, and before he drew nigh the place, crowds came to meet him from that place and from the town, and many went before

nim with branches of olive in their hands, crying aloud: "Behold, the Saint! behold, the Saint!" and for the devotion and desire that the people had to touch him, there was a great throng and press about him: but he, going on with mind through contemplation uplifted and rapt in God, albeit the people touched and held and plucked at him, like one insensible, knew naught at all of what was done and said around him; nor was he ware that he was passing through that place or through that country. Having passed through the town, when the crowds had returned to their homes, he came to a lazar-house, a full mile beyond the town, and returning to himself again, as one coming from another world, the Celestial contemplative asked his companion: "When shall we be near the town?" Of a truth his soul, fixed and rapt in contemplation of heavenly things, had taken no heed of any earthly thing, nor the changes of place, nor of time, nor of folk that met them by the way. And even so it befell many other times even as his companions with clear knowledge had proof thereof. That evening Saint Francis came to the house of the brothers of Monte Casale, in which house was a brother so cruelly sick and so horribly tormented by his sickness, that his disease seemed rather some infliction and torment of the devil than a natural sickness; for sometimes he would throw himself flat upon the ground with a great trembling and with foaming at the mouth; then all the muscles of his body would shrink; now would they stretch, now bend, now twist; now

His contemplation of heavenly things

He heals the sick

his heels would be drawn up to the nape of his neck, and he would leap high in the air and at once fall flat upon his back. And as Saint Francis sat at table, hearing from the brothers of this brother so miserably sick and so incurable, he had compassion upon him; and taking a bit of bread, that he was eating, he made over it the sign of the most holy Cross with his holy pierced hands, and gave it to the sick brother: the which, when he had eaten, was made perfectly whole and never felt that sickness any more. When the next morning came, Saint Francis sent two of the brothers of that House to live at Alvernia, and he sent back with them the peasant that had walked behind the ass that had been lent him, desiring that he should return therewith to his own house. So the brothers set out with the said peasant, and as they came into the country of Arezzo, certain men of those parts beheld them from far off, and were exceeding glad deeming that it was Saint Francis, who had passed that way two days before: for a woman among them that had been in travail three days and could not bring to the birth, was like to die: and they thought to see her safe and sound again, if Saint Francis laid his holy hands upon her. But as the said brothers drew near, and they perceived that it was not Saint Francis, they were exceeding sorrowful, but albeit the Saint was not there in bodily presence, nathless his virtue was not lacking, sith they lacked not in faith. O marvellous thing! the woman was at the point

to die and had already the marks of death upon her. They asked the brothers if they had aught that had been touched by the most holy hands of Saint Francis. The brothers bethought them and searched diligently, but in the end found naught that Saint Francis had touched with his hands, save only the halter of the ass whereon he had ridden. With great reverence and devotion they took this halter and laid it on the body of the woman that was with child, calling devoutly on the name of Saint Francis and faithfully commending themselves unto him. And what more? So soon as the halter was laid upon the woman, straightway was she delivered from all peril, and easily and safely gave birth with joy. Saint Francis, after he had tarried for some days in the said House, departed and went to the city of Castello. And behold, many of the townsfolk came to meet him, and brought unto him a woman that had been long time possessed of a devil and besought him humbly to set her free, for with doleful howlings and piercing shrieks and barking like a dog she disturbed all the country round. Then Saint Francis, having first prayed and made over her the sign of the most holy Cross, commanded the devil to depart from her: and straightway he departed and left her whole in body and in mind. And this miracle being noised abroad among the people, another woman with great faith brought to him her son grievously afflicted with a cruel wound, and besought him devoutly that he would be pleased to make the sign of the cross upon it with his hands.

He drives out a devil

He departs from Castello

Then Saint Francis, hearing her prayer, took the child and untied the bandage of the wound and blessed him, making three times the sign of the most holy Cross upon the wound, and then with his own hands bound it up again, and gave him back to his mother: and because it was evening, she straightway laid him down upon the bed to sleep. In the morning she came to take him out of bed and found the bandages unbound: and looked and found him so perfectly healed as though he had had no hurt at all; save at the place where the wound had been, the flesh had grown over, like to a red rose: and that rather in token of the miracle, than as a sign of the wound: for the said rose remaining all through his life, often stirred up in him devotion to Saint Francis who had healed him. At the prayers of the devout townsfolk, Saint Francis abode in that city a month, in the which time he wrought many other miracles; and then he departed to go unto Saint Mary of the Angels with Brother Leo and with a certain good man that lent him his ass, on the which Saint Francis rode. Now it befell that by reason of the bad roads and of the severe cold, though they journeyed all day, they could not reach a house wherein to lodge: wherefore, constrained by the darkness and the storm, they took shelter under the brow of a hollow rock, for to escape the snow and the night that was coming on.

And being in this evil plight and eke ill-covered, the good man whose ass it was, could not sleep by reason of the cold, and seeing that

they had no means to make a fire, began softly to complain within himself and to lament, and as it were to murmur against Saint Francis that had brought him to such a place. Then Saint Francis being ware of it, had compassion upon him; and in fervour of spirit stretched out his hand towards him, and touched him. O wondrous thing! so soon as he had touched him with that hand which had been kindled and pierced by the fire of the Seraph, all the cold left him; and such heat entered into him both within and from without that he seemed to be near to the mouth of a blazing furnace, so that straightway comforted in soul and body, he fell asleep: and, by his own report, he slept that night more sweetly among the rocks and snow until dawn, than ever he slept in his own bed. On the next day they went on their journey, and came to Saint Mary of the Angels: and as they drew near, Brother Leo lifted up his eyes, and looked towards the said House of Saint Mary of the Angels, and saw a Cross exceeding beautiful, whereon was the figure of the Crucified, going before Saint Francis, and with such accord did the said Cross go before the face of Saint Francis, that when he rested, it rested also, and when he went on, it went on too: and that Cross was of such splendour that not only was its light reflected in the face of Saint Francis, but likewise all the road was lit up round about him; and it lasted until Saint Francis entered into the House of Saint Mary of the Angels. Saint Francis then being come with Brother Leo, they were received

He comes to St Mary of the Angels

The beautiful cross

by the brothers with exceeding great joy and love, and from thenceforth until his death Saint Francis spent the most of his time in that House of Saint Mary of the Angels. And the fame of his sanctity and of his miracles spread continually more and more throughout the Order and throughout the world, albeit in his deep humility he hid, as best he could, the graces and the gifts of God, and called himself the greatest of sinners. Whereat Brother Leo marvelling on a time and thinking foolishly within himself: "Behold, he calls himself the greatest of sinners in the ears of all men; and he has become great in the Order; and is so much honoured of God; and nevertheless in secret he never confesses himself guilty of carnal sin: can it be that he is still a virgin?" and thereupon a great desire began to take hold on him, to know the truth thereof, but he dared not to ask Saint Francis. Wherefore he turned himself to God; and besought Him earnestly to certify him in that which he desired to know; and for his much praying and through the merits of Saint Francis he was heard, and was certified that Saint Francis was in very sooth a virgin in body, through the vision that followeth. For he saw in a dream Saint Francis standing on a high place and honourable, unto which none could reach or set himself by his side; and it was told him in spirit that this place so high and so pre-eminent signified the pre-eminence of virginal chastity in Saint Francis, which rightly accorded with the flesh that was to be adorned with the most holy

Stigmata of Christ. Saint Francis, seeing that by reason of the Stigmata of Christ the strength of his body was little by little failing him, and that he could no longer take care for the government of the Order, summoned the General Chapter in haste: the which being all assembled, he humbly excused himself before the brothers for the bodily frailty, whereby he could no more take on him the care of the Order, as touching the work of the general; howbeit he would not lay down the office of general, for that he could not do, sith he had been made General by the Pope, and therefore he could not leave the office or put a successor in his place without the express permission of the Pope; but he appointed as his Vicar Brother Peter Cattani, commending the Order unto him and the Ministers of the provinces with all the affection that he could. And this done, Saint Francis comforted in spirit, lifting his eyes and hands to heaven, spake thus: "To Thee, O Lord my God, to Thee do I commend Thy family, the which Thou hast committed unto me until this hour, and now through mine infirmities, that Thou wottest of, most sweet my Lord, I can no longer take care for it. Likewise do I commend it unto the Ministers of the provinces; let them be bound to render an account on the Day of Judgment, if any brother, through their negligence, or their bad example, or their too harsh severity, should perish." And by these words, as it pleased God, all the brothers in the Chapter understood that he spake of the holy Stigmata,

St Francis appoints a Vicar

and gives him the care of the Order

in that he excused himself by reason of his infirmity; and of their devotion none of them could refrain themselves from weeping. And from thenceforth he left all the care and government of the Order in the hands of his Vicar and of the Ministers of the provinces; and said: "Now that I have given up the care of the Order by reason of my infirmities, I am henceforth in naught bound save to pray God for our Order and to give a good example to the brothers. And I know well of very sooth, that were mine infirmity to depart from me, the greatest help that I could give the Order, would be to pray to God continually for it, that he would defend and guide and keep it." Now, as has been set forth above, albeit Saint Francis strove as best he might to hide the most holy Stigmata, and ever since he had received them, always went with hands bound up and feet shod, yet he could not prevent many brothers from seeing and touching them in divers manners, and chief of all the wound in the side, the which he strove with greater diligence to hide. Thus a brother that did him service, on a time induced him with pious craft to take off his tunic, for to shake out the dust therefrom: and as he took it off before him, the brother clearly saw the wound in the side; and quickly putting his hand on his breast, touched it with his three fingers, and learned the breadth and depth of it: and in like manner his Vicar saw it also. But Brother Ruffino was still more clearly certified thereof: he was a man of very great contemplation, of whom Saint

Francis said many times that there was no man in the world more holy than he, and for his sanctity he loved him with all his heart and suffered him in whatsoever things he desired. This Brother Ruffino certified himself and others of the most holy Stigmata, and above all of that in his side, in three ways. The first was, that having to wash the hose, which Saint Francis wore so large, that drawing them up he covered the wound in his right side therewith, the said Brother Ruffino examined and considered them diligently, and each time he found them stained with blood on the right side; whereby he perceived of a surety that this was blood that came from out the wound aforesaid: but for this Saint Francis reproved him, when he saw that he spread out the hose that he took off, for to see this token. The second way was, that on a time the said Brother Ruffino of set purpose thrust his fingers into the wound in the side; so that Saint Francis for the pain that he felt, cried out aloud: "God pardon thee, O Brother Ruffino, wherefore hast thou done this thing?" The third way was, that on a time he besought Saint Francis instantly as a most gracious favour, to give him his cloak and take his instead for the love of charity; yielding to his prayer, albeit unwillingly, the loving Father drew off his cloak and gave it him and took his instead; and then in this drawing off and putting on again, Brother Ruffino plainly saw the wound aforesaid. Brother Leo likewise and many other brothers saw the said most holy Stigmata of Saint Francis

The certifying of the Stigmata

Lady Jacoba di Sentensoli

while he was yet alive: the which brothers, though for their sanctity they were men worthy of trust and to be believed on their bare word, nevertheless, for to take away all doubt from the hearts of men, they swore on the holy Book that they had clearly seen them. Likewise certain cardinals that were his own familiar friends, saw them, and in reverence for the said most holy Stigmata of Saint Francis they wrote and made beautiful and devout Hymns and Antiphons and Proses.* The Supreme Pontiff, Pope Alexander, while preaching to the people in the presence of all the cardinals, among the which was Saint Bonaventura, that was a cardinal, said and affirmed that he had seen with his own eyes the sacred Stigmata of Saint Francis, while he was yet alive. And the Lady Jacoba di Sentensoli of Rome, who was the greatest lady of her time in Rome, and had a great devotion unto Saint Francis, both before he died and after his death, both saw and kissed them many times with much reverence, because by divine revelation she came from Rome to Assisi for to be present at the death of Saint Francis, and it befell in this wise. Saint Francis, some days before his death, lay sick at Assisi in the palace of the Bishop along with certain of his companions, and in spite of all his sickness he oftentimes sang certain songs of praise to Christ. On a day one of his companions said unto him: "Father, thou knowest that

* *i.e.*, A Latin hymn having rhyme and an equal number of syllables in each line, but no metre.

these townsfolk have great faith in thee and deem thee a holy man; and to the end that they may think that thou art truly what they deem thee, thou oughtest in this thy sickness to bethink thee of death, and to rather weep than sing, seeing that thou art so grievously sick: and know that thy singing and ours, that thou dost make us sing, is heard of many persons both within the palace and without; sith for thy sake this palace is guarded by many men-at-arms, the which perchance may find therein a bad example. Wherefore methinks," quoth this brother, "that thou wouldest do well to depart hence, and that we should all return to Saint Mary of the Angels, for it is not well with us here among the men of the world." Saint Francis answered him: "Brother most dear, thou knowest that it is now two years since God revealed to thee the limit of my life, what time we sojourned in Fuligno, and likewise hath He revealed also unto me that a few days hence, in the course of this sickness, that limit will be reached: and in that revelation hath God assured me of the remission of all my sins and of the bliss of Paradise. Before that revelation, I wept for death and for my sins: but now that this revelation is made known to me, I am so full of joy, that I can weep no more; therefore I sing and still shall sing to God, that hath given to me the blessing of His grace, and hath assured me of the blessings of the glory of Paradise. Touching our departure hence, I agree thereto and am well pleased, but do ye find some means to carry

Paradise assured to St Francis

St Francis blesses Assisi

me, sith for mine infirmity I cannot go afoot." Then the brothers took him up in their arms and carried him, and many of the townsfolk bare them company. And coming to a hospice that was by the way, Saint Francis said unto them that bore him: "Set me down upon the ground and turn me towards the city." And when that he was laid with his face turned towards Assisi, he blessed the city with many blessings, saying: "Blessed be thou of God, O holy city, seeing that through thee shall many souls be saved, and in thee shall dwell many servants of the Lord: and out of thee shall many be chosen for the kingdom of eternal life." And said these words, he let carry him on, to Saint Mary of the Angels. And when that they were come to Saint Mary of the Angels, they carried him into the infirmary, and laid him down there to rest. Then Saint Francis called unto him one of his companions, and said unto him: "Brother most dear, God hath revealed to me that from this sickness, on such a day, I shall pass away from this life: now thou wottest that the beloved Lady Jacoba di Sentensoli, who is so devoted to our Order, would be sore grieving, if she heard of my death and had not herself been present: whereby send her word that if she would see me alive again, let her come here straightway." Replied the brother: "Father, thou hast well said; for of very sooth for the great devotion that she bears thee, it would not at all be fitting that she should be absent at thy death." "Go then," quoth Saint Francis,

"and bring me inkhorn and paper and pen, and write as I shall tell thee." And when that he had brought them, Saint Francis dictated the letter after this manner: "To the Lady Jacoba, the servant of God, Brother Francis the poor little one of Christ, greeting, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit in our Lord Jesu Christ. Know, dear lady, that Christ, the blessed One, hath of His grace revealed unto me that the end of my life is shortly at hand. Wherefore, if thou desire to see me still alive, when thou hast seen this letter, do thou arise and come unto Saint Mary of the Angels: for if thou art not come by such a day, thou wilt not find me still alive: and bring with thee a shroud of haircloth, to wrap my body in, and the wax that is needed for the burial. I pray thee likewise that thou bring me some of the food that thou wast wont to give me, when I lay sick in Rome." And whiles this letter was in writing, it was of God revealed unto Saint Francis that the Lady Jacoba was coming unto him and was even now come nigh the House, and was bringing with her all the things that he was asking for by letter. Therefore, having this revelation, Saint Francis said unto the brother that was writing the letter, that he should write no more, seeing that there was no need, but should lay the letter aside: at the which thing the brothers marvelled much, in that he finished not the letter and desired that it should not be sent. And after a little space, there was a loud knocking at the door of the House, and Saint Francis sent

The letter to the Lady Jacoba

Lady Jacoba comforts St Francis

the porter to open it: and the door being opened, behold! there was the Lady Jacoba, the most noble lady in all Rome, with her two sons that were senators of Rome, and a great company of horsemen, and they entered in; and the Lady Jacoba went straight to the infirmary and came unto Saint Francis. And of her coming Saint Francis had exceeding great joy and comfort, and she likewise, beholding him still alive and having speech of him. Then she told him how God had revealed unto her in Rome, as she was at prayer, the near end of his life, and how he would send for her and ask for those things, all of which she said she had brought with her; and she let bring them to Saint Francis, and gave them him to eat. And when he had eaten and was much comforted, the Lady Jacoba kneeled down at the feet of Saint Francis, and took those most holy feet marked and adorned with the wounds of Christ, and kissed them and bathed them with her tears in such a rapture of devotion, that to the brothers that stood around it seemed they saw the very Magdalene herself at the feet of Jesu Christ, and by no means could they draw her away. And at length after a long space they lifted her up thence and drew her aside; and they asked her how she had come at a time so fitting and so well provided with all the things that were needed for the sustenance and for the burial of Saint Francis. Replied the Lady Jacoba that, as she was praying in Rome one night, she heard a voice from heaven saying: "If thou desire to see Saint

Francis still alive, delay not to go unto Assisi, and take with thee the things thou wast wont to give him when he was sick, and the things that will be needed for his burial; and" (quoth she) "even so have I done." So the said Lady Jacoba abode there until such time as Saint Francis passed away from this life and was buried; and she paid great honour unto his burying, she and all her company, and she bore the charges of whatsoever was needed. Then returning to Rome, after a short time this gentle lady died a holy death; and of her devotion to Saint Francis, she decided and desired to be carried to Saint Mary of the Angels and be buried there; and so was it done. St Francis dies

How Jerome touched and saw the most holy Stigmata of Saint Francis, wherein at first he disbelieved

After the death of Saint Francis not only did the aforesaid Lady Jacoba and her sons together with all her company see and kiss his glorious sacred Stigmata, but likewise many citizens of Assisi; among the which was a knight of great renown and a man of worth, named Jerome, the which doubted much thereof and was unbelieving, even as Saint Thomas the Apostle doubted the wounds of Christ; and to certify himself and the others he boldly in the presence of the brothers and the lay-folk moved the nails in the hands and feet, and felt the wound in the side, for a clear testimony. For the which cause he bore

witness of that truth constantly, swearing on the Book that so it was, and so had he seen and touched. Likewise Saint Clare with her nuns, the which were present at his burial, saw and kissed the glorious sacred Stigmata of Saint Francis.

St Francis canonised

Of the day and of the year of the death of Saint Francis

The glorious confessor of Christ, Saint Francis, passed away from this life in the year of our Lord one thousand two hundred and twenty-six, on the fourth day of October, being Saturday, and was buried on the Sunday. This year was the twentieth year of his conversion, to wit, when he began to do penance, and was the second year after the imprinting of the most holy Stigmata, and he was in the forty-fifth year of his age.

Of the canonisation of Saint Francis

Thereafter was Saint Francis canonised, in the year one thousand two hundred and twenty-eight, by Pope Gregory IX.; the which came in his proper person to Assisi for to canonise him. And this sufficeth for the fourth reflection.

Of the fifth and last reflection on the most holy Stigmata

The fifth and last reflection is touching certain apparitions and miracles that God wrought and

showed forth after the death of Saint Francis, for the confirmation of his most holy Stigmata, and for a testimony of the day and the hour whereon Christ gave them him. And as touching this, ye must needs know that in the year of our Lord one thousand two hundred and eighty-two, in the month of October, Brother Philip, minister of Tuscany, by order of Brother John Buonagrazia, the minister general, required of Brother Matthew of Castiglione in Arezzo, a man of great devotion and sanctity, that by holy obedience he should say what he knew of the day and of the hour, wherein the most holy Stigmata were by Christ imprinted on the body of Saint Francis; for it was known that he had received a revelation thereon. The which Brother Matthew, being constrained by holy obedience, answered him thus: "Being in the community of Alvernia last year in the month of May, I began one day to pray in the cell that is in the place where it is believed that the seraphic vision took place. And in my prayer I besought God very devoutly to be pleased to reveal unto some one the day and the hour and the place wherein the most holy Stigmata were imprinted on the body of Saint Francis. And as I continued in prayer and in this petition beyond the first watch of the night, there appeared unto me Saint Francis in an exceeding bright light, and said unto me: 'Son, for what dost thou pray to God?' And I said unto him: 'Father, I pray for such and such a thing.' And he said unto me: 'I am thy father Francis: dost thou

The revelation to Brother Matthew

St Francis appears to Brother Matthew

know me well?' 'Yea, Father,' quoth I. Then he showed to me the most holy Stigmata in his hands and his feet and his side, and said: 'The time is come when God wills for His glory to manifest that which the brothers have hitherto not cared to learn. Know that He that appeared unto me was not an angel, but was Jesu Christ in the form of a Seraph: who with His own hands imprinted these wounds upon my body, even as He received them in His body on the cross; and it was on this wise: on the day before the Exaltation of the Holy Cross there came to me an Angel, and bade me in the name of God make myself ready to be patient and to receive whatsoever God might will to send me. And I replied that I was ready to receive and to endure all things according to God's good pleasure. Then on the morning following, on the festival of the Holy Cross, which that year fell on a Friday, at day-break I left my cell in exceeding great fervour of spirit and went to pray in the place where thou art now, in which place I used oftentimes to pray. And as I prayed, behold through the air there came down from heaven a young man crucified, in the form of a Seraph with six wings, and with great swiftness: at this wondrous sight I kneeled humbly down and began devoutly to contemplate the immeasurable love of Jesu Christ Crucified, and the immeasurable pain of His passion; and the sight of Him begat in me so great compassion that I seemed in mine own person to feel that very Passion in my body; and at His presence

all this mountain shone like the sun; and thus descending He came close to me. And standing before me, He spake to me certain secret words, the which I have not yet revealed to any man; but the time is at hand when they shall be revealed. Then after a little space, Christ departed and returned into heaven; and I found myself thus marked with these wounds. Go then,' quoth Saint Francis, 'and tell these things with confidence unto thy minister; for this is the working of God and not of man.' And said these words, Saint Francis gave me his blessing, and went up again into heaven with a great company of youths in shining garments." All these things Brother Matthew said he had seen and heard not sleeping but awake. And so he swore that he had himself told unto the said minister in his cell at Florence, when he questioned him thereon by holy obedience.

Christ's secret words to St Francis

How a holy brother reading the legend of Saint Francis in the chapter on the most holy Stigmata and on the secret words, which the Seraph spake unto Saint Francis when he appeared unto him, prayed to God so much that Saint Francis revealed them unto him

Upon another time a devout brother and holy, reading the legend of Saint Francis in the chapter on the most holy Stigmata, began with great perplexity of spirit to ponder what those words so secret could have been which Saint Francis said he would reveal to no man, so long as he lived,

Obedience more meritorious than prayer

the which the Seraph had spoken when he appeared to him. And this brother said within himself: "Those words Saint Francis would not tell to any man while he lived: but now after the death of his body he may perchance tell them, if devout prayer be made to him." And from thenceforth, the devout brother began to pray to God and to Saint Francis that it might please them to reveal those words; and this brother persevering for eight years in this prayer, in the eighth year he merited to be heard after this wise. One day after the breaking of bread, when they had given thanks in the church, as he was at prayer in a certain part of the church, and was praying to God and to Saint Francis more devoutly than he was wont, and with many tears, he was called by another of the brothers, and was bidden in the name of the guardian to go with him to the fields for the profit of the House. Wherefore he, nothing doubting that obedience is more meritorious than prayer, straightway when he heard the command of the superior, humbly left his prayers and went with the brother that called him. And as it pleased God, by this act of ready obedience he merited that which by long hours of prayer he had not merited. For so soon as they were come without the door of the House, they met two brothers, strangers, the which seemed as though they had come from a far country, and one of them seemed to be young, and the other old and lean, and by reason of foul weather they were all wet and stained with mud. So that obedient brother, having great compassion

on them, said to the companion that was with him: "O my brother most dear, if the business that we are going upon, may be delayed a little, seeing that these stranger brothers have great need to be charitably received, I pray thee that thou suffer me first to go and wash their feet, and especially the feet of that aged brother who hath greater need thereof, and you will be able to wash those of the younger one; and then we will go about the business of the convent." Then this brother consenting unto the charity of his companion, they went back into the convent; and receiving those stranger brothers with much charity, they took them into the kitchen that they might warm and dry themselves by the fire; and eight other brothers of the House were warming themselves by the said fire. And when they had sat a while by the fire, they took them aside for to wash their feet, according as they had agreed together. And as that obedient and devout brother was washing the feet of the older brother, and was wiping off the mud, for they were very muddy, he looked and saw that his feet were marked with the most holy Stigmata; and straightway in joy and wonder embracing them in a close embrace, he began to cry out: "Either thou art Christ, or thou art Saint Francis." At the sound of his voice and at these words, the brothers that were by the fire arose, and came near with great fear and reverence to behold those glorious Stigmata. Then at their prayers that aged brother suffered them clearly to see and touch and kiss them. And

The stranger brothers

St Francis reveals the secret words

as they marvelled more and more for joy, he said unto them: "Fear not and be not doubting, brothers most dear and sons; I am your father, Brother Francis, who by the will of God, founded three Orders. And sith I have been entreated, these eight years, by this brother that is washing my feet, and to-day more fervently than any other time, that I should reveal to him the secret words that the Seraph spake to me when he gave me the Stigmata, the which words I would never reveal in my life-time, this day by the command of God, because of his perseverance and his ready obedience, wherewith he left the sweetness of contemplation, I am sent by God to reveal before you all that which he asked." Then Saint Francis turning towards that brother, said: "Know, brother most dear, that being on the mount of Alvernia, all rapt in the remembrance of the Passion of Christ in that seraphic apparition, I was of Christ thus marked on my body with the Stigmata, and then Christ spake unto me: 'Knowest thou that which I have done unto thee? I have given thee the signs of My Passion, to the end that thou mayest be my standard-bearer. And even as I on the day of My death descended into hell and brought out thence all the souls that I found therein and led them to Paradise, by virtue of my Stigmata; so do I grant to thee this hour, that thou shalt thus be conformed to me in death, as thou hast been in life, that after thou hast passed away from this life, every year on the day of thy death thou shalt go to Purgatory, and in virtue of thy Stigmata

that I have given thee, thou shalt bring out thence all the souls of thy three Orders, to wit, Minors, Sisters, and Continents, and likewise those thou mayest find there, that have had a devotion unto thee, and shalt lead them unto Paradise.' And these words I told to none, whiles I lived in the world." And said these words, Saint Francis and his companion vanished away incontinent. Afterwards many brothers heard of this from those eight brothers that were present at this vision and speech of Saint Francis.

He appears to Brother John of Alvernia

How Saint Francis, being dead, appeared unto Brother John of Alvernia, as he was at prayer

On the mount of Alvernia Saint Francis on a time appeared unto Brother John of Alvernia, a man of great sanctity, as he was at prayer, and stood and spake with him for a very long space, and in the end desiring to depart, spake thus: "Ask of me whatsoe'er thou wilt." Quoth Brother John: "Father, I pray thee tell me what I have long time desired to know, to wit, what thou wast doing and where thou wast when the Seraph appeared to thee." Replied Saint Francis: "I was praying in the place where now is the Chapel of the Count Simon da Battifolle, and I was asking two graces of my Lord Jesu Christ. The first was that He should grant me in my life-time to feel in my soul and my body, as far as might be, all the pain that He had felt in Himself at the time of His

and holds speech with him most bitter Passion. The second grace that I asked of Him was in like manner that I might feel in my heart that exceeding love, wherewith He was enkindled to endure so great suffering for us sinners. Then God put it into my heart that He would grant me to feel both the one and the other, as far as was possible to the mere creature: the which thing was indeed fulfilled in me by the imprinting of the Stigmata." Then Brother John asked him if the secret words that the Seraph had spoken to him had been even as told by the holy brother aforesaid: the which affirmed that he had heard them from Saint Francis in the presence of eight brothers. Saint Francis replied that the truth was even as that brother had said. Then Brother John, seeing that he so freely gave, took heart to ask, and said thus: "O father, most earnestly I do beseech thee to suffer me to see and kiss thy most holy and glorious Stigmata, not that I doubt at all, but only for my consolation; sith always have I longed for this." And Saint Francis freely showing them and presenting them unto him, Brother John saw them clearly and touched and kissed them. And at the last he asked him: "Father, what consolation must thy soul have felt, when thou sawest Christ the blessed One come to thee and give thee the marks of His most holy Passion! now would to God that I might feel a little of that sweetness!" Then replied Saint Francis: "Seest thou these nails?" Quoth Brother John: "Yea, Father." "Touch once again,"

said Saint Francis, "this nail that is in my hand." Then Brother John with great reverence and fear touched the nail, and straightway at the touch thereof there came forth as it were a little column of smoke, as of incense, and entering into the nostrils of Brother John, filled his soul and body with such sweetness that straightway he was rapt in God and became insensible; and thus rapt he continued from that hour, which was the hour of Tierce, even until Vespers. And this vision and familiar speech with Saint Francis Brother John told unto no one save unto his confessor, until he came to die; but being at the point of death, he revealed it to several brothers. The wondrous vision

Of a holy brother that saw a wondrous vision of one of his companions that was dead

In the province of Rome, a very devout brother and holy beheld this wondrous vision. One of the brothers, his companion that was most dear to him, having died on a night and in the morning been buried before the entrance to the Chapter-house, on that same day this brother withdrew himself into a corner of the Chapter-house after the breaking of bread, for to pray devoutly to God and to Saint Francis for the soul of the dead brother, his companion. And as he continued in prayer with supplications and with tears until noon, what time all the others had gone away to sleep, behold he was ware of a great noise in the cloister. Whereat straight-

The burning soul

way with great fear he turned his eyes towards the grave of his companion; and he saw standing in the entrance to the Chapter-house Saint Francis, and behind him a great company of brothers round about the grave. And as he still looked, he saw in the middle of the cloister a great flaming fire, and standing in the midst of the flames the soul of his dead companion. And looking round about the cloister, he saw Jesu Christ walking round the cloister with a great company of angels and of saints. And as with great amazement he gazed upon these things, he saw that when Christ passed in front of the Chapter-house, Saint Francis with all those brothers kneeled down and bespake Him thus: "I pray Thee, my dearest Father and Lord, by the inestimable love which in Thine incarnation Thou hast shown to the children of men, that Thou have mercy on the soul of this my brother, who burneth in this fire"; and Christ answered him not a word, but passed on. And as He came back a second time and passed in front of the Chapter-house, Saint Francis kneeled him down again with his brothers as before, and besought Him in this wise: "I pray Thee, pitying Father and Lord, for the boundless love that Thou didst show to the children of men, when Thou didst die on the wood of the Cross, that Thou have pity of the soul of this my brother": and Christ passed him by as before and heard him not. And going round the cloister, He returned the third time, and passed in front of the Chapter-house; and

then Saint Francis kneeling down as at first, showing Him his hands and feet and side, spake thus: "I pray Thee, pitying Father and Lord, by the great pains and the great consolation that I felt when Thou didst imprint these Stigmata upon my flesh, that Thou have mercy on the soul of this my brother, that is in the fire of Purgatory." O wondrous thing! when Saint Francis prayed to Christ this third time in the name of his Stigmata, straightway He stayed His steps and gazed upon the Stigmata; and He heard his prayer, and spake thus: "Unto thee, Francis, do I grant the soul of thy brother." And hereby, of a surety, He desired to honour and confirm the glorious Stigmata of Saint Francis, and openly to show that the souls of his brothers that go to Purgatory, can in no way more easily be freed from their pains and brought to the glory of Paradise, than by virtue of his Stigmata, according to the words that Christ spake unto Saint Francis, when He imprinted them. For as soon as these words were spoken, the fire in the cloister vanished away, and the dead brother came to Saint Francis, and together with him and with Christ, all that company of the blessed with their glorious King went up into heaven. For the which cause this brother, his companion, that had prayed for him, beholding him freed from his pains and taken to Paradise, had exceeding great joy; and thereafter he told all the vision in order unto the other brothers, and together with them offered praise and thanksgiving unto God.

St Francis saves a brother's soul

How a noble knight, devoted to Saint Francis, was certified of the death and the holy Stigmata of Saint Francis

Landolfo and the devil

A noble knight of Massa di San Pietro, by name Landolfo, the which had a very great devotion to Saint Francis, and at the last received at his hands the habit of the Third Order, was certified of the death of Saint Francis, and of his most holy and glorious Stigmata, after this manner: what time Saint Francis was nigh unto death, the devil entered into a woman of that place and cruelly tormented her, and therewithal made her to speak with such learned subtlety that she vanquished all the wise and learned men that came to dispute with her. Now it befell that the devil departing from her left her free for two days: and on the third day returning to her again, afflicted her yet more cruelly than before. Hearing of this matter, Landolfo went unto the woman and asked of the devil that dwelt in her, what was the reason that he had left her for two days and thereafter returning tormented her still more grievously than at the first. Replied the demon: "When I left her, it was because I and all my companions, that be in these parts, were gathered together and went in great force to the death of Francis, the beggar, for to dispute with him and take his soul: but sith it was surrounded and defended by a host of Angels in number more than we, and was carried by them straight up into heaven, and we gat us away in confusion, I have there-

fore returned to this wretched woman and am making up for what I left undone those two days." Then Landolfo conjured him in the name of God to tell him what was the truth touching the sanctity of Saint Francis, whom he reported to be dead, and of Saint Clare, that was alive. Replied the devil: "Whether I had rather or not, yet will I tell thee all the truth. God the Father was so wroth against the sins of the world, that it seemed that in a little while He would give the sentence of death upon men and women, and would sweep them off the face of the earth, if they amended not their ways. But Christ, His Son, praying for sinners, promised to renew His life and His passion in a man, to wit, in Francis, the poor little one, the beggar; by whose life and doctrine He would bring back many throughout all the world into the way of truth, and many also unto penitence. And now for to show to the world what He had wrought in Saint Francis, He hath willed that the Stigmata of His passion, the which He had imprinted on his body while he lived, should now be seen of many and touched after his death. In like manner, the Mother of Christ promised to renew her virginal purity and her humility in a woman, to wit, Sister Clare, in such fashion that by her ensample she would deliver many thousands of women out of our hands. And the anger of God the Father being turned away by these promises, He delayed the sentence of death." Then Landolfo, desiring to know of a surety whether the devil, who is

The sanctity of St Francis and St Clare

Gregory IX. certified of the Stigmata

the armoury and father of lies, was in these matters speaking the truth, and chiefly touching the death of St Francis, sent one of his faithful squires to Assisi, unto Saint Mary of the Angels, for to learn if Saint Francis were alive or dead: the which squire winning there, found of a sooth that it was so, and coming back again told to his lord that on the very day and hour that the devil had said, Saint Francis had passed away from this life.

How Pope Gregory IX., doubting of the Stigmata of Saint Francis, was certified thereof

Leaving now all the miracles of the most holy Stigmata of Saint Francis, the which are to be read in his Legend, for the ending of this fifth reflection ye must know that Pope Gregory IX. doubting a little touching the wound in the side of Saint Francis, as he afterwards related, one night Saint Francis appeared unto him, and lifting up his right arm a little, uncovered the wound in his side, and asked him for a phial, and he let bring it; and Saint Francis let put it under the wound in the side; and of very sooth it seemed to the Pope that it was filled up to the brim with blood mingled with water that issued from the wound; and from thenceforth all doubt departed from him. And afterwards, with the counsel of all the cardinals, he approved the most holy Stigmata of Saint Francis, and on their account gave to the brothers a special privilege by a Bull, and this he did at Viterbo in the eleventh year of

his pontificate; and afterwards in the twelfth year he gave another more extensive still. Then Pope Nicholas III. and Pope Alexander granted high privileges, by the which whoso denied the sacred Stigmata of Saint Francis might be dealt with as a heretic. And this is enough as touching the fifth reflection on the glorious and most holy Stigmata of our Father, Saint Francis, whose life may God give us grace so to follow in this world, that by the virtue of his glorious Stigmata we may merit to be saved with him in Paradise. To the praise of Jesu Christ and of His poor little one, Saint Francis. Amen.

He gives the Brothers a Bull

Here beginneth the life of Brother Juniper

I. How Brother Juniper cut off the foot of a pig, merely to give it to a sick man

Brother Juniper

ONE of the most elect disciples and first companions of Saint Francis was Brother Juniper, a man of deep humility, of great fervour and charity; of whom Saint Francis, speaking on a time with his holy companions, said: "He would be a good Brother Minor who had conquered himself and the world like Brother Juniper." On a time at Saint Mary of the Angels, when all afire with the love of God he was visiting a sick brother, he asked him with much compassion: "Can I do thee any service?" Replied the sick man: "Much comfort would it give me, if thou couldest get me a pig's trotter to eat." Straightway cried Brother Juniper: "Leave that to me, I'll fetch you one at once"; so he went and took a knife, from the kitchen I believe, and in fervour of spirit ran through the wood where divers pigs were feeding, threw himself on one of them, cut off its foot and ran away, leaving the pig with feet so maimed; and returning, he washed and dressed and cooked the foot; and when with much diligence he had prepared it well, he brought the said foot

to the sick man with much great charity. And the sick man ate it up right greedily, to the great comfort and delight of Brother Juniper; who with great glee, for to glad the heart of the sick man, told him of the assaults he had made upon the pig. Meanwhile the man who kept the pigs and saw this brother cut off its foot, with bitter words told all the story in order to his lord. And when he was ware of it, he came to the house of the brothers, calling them hypocrites, thieves and liars, and rogues and knaves, and saying: "Why have ye cut off the foot of my pig?" At the noise that he made, Saint Francis and all his brothers came out, and with all humility made excuses for his brethren, and wotting naught of what was done, for to appease him promised to restore him all that he had lost. But for all that, he was no whit appeased, but with much wrath, insults, and threats, went away from the brothers full of anger, repeating over and over how basely they had cut off the foot of his pig, and taking no excuse or promise, gat him gone in a rage. And Saint Francis full of discretion, whileas all the other brothers were in much amazement, bethought him, and said within his heart: "Can Brother Juniper have done this thing in zeal too indiscreet?" And he let call Brother Juniper unto him secretly, and asked him, saying: "Didst thou cut off the foot of a pig in the wood?" Whereat Brother Juniper, not as one that had made a fault, but as one that seemed to himself to have

He cuts off the foot of a pig

His reason for the act

done a deed of great charity, all gladly answered, and said: "Sweet my Father, it is true that I cut off a foot from the said pig; and as touching the reason, my Father, if thou wilt, do thou give ear to it compassionately. Out of charity I went to visit such and such a sick brother"; and he told him all that befell in order, and then added: "I tell thee, that bearing in mind the consolation that this our brother felt, and the comfort that the said foot brought to him, if I had cut off the feet of a hundred pigs as I did of one, in very sooth, methinks God would have said, Well done." Whereat Saint Francis, with righteous zeal and great severity, said: "O Brother Juniper, why hast thou now given so great scandal? not without reason doth this man complain and is so wroth against us: and perchance he is now going through the city, speaking evil of us for such ill-doing, and I ween he hath good reason. Wherefore I command thee by holy obedience, that thou run after him till thou come up with him, and throw thyself upon the ground before him and confess thy fault, promising to make such satisfaction and after such a fashion that he may have no ground to complain of us: for of a truth this has been too grievous an offence." Brother Juniper marvelled much at the words aforesaid: and was amazed, being surprised that any one should be angry at so charitable a deed; for it seemed to him that these temporal things were naught, save in so far as men of their charity shared them with their neighbours.

And Brother Juniper answered: "Doubt not, my Father, that I will pacify him straightway, and content him. And why should he be so disquieted, seeing that this pig, whose foot I have cut off, was rather God's than his, and great charity hath been done thereby?" So he set out at a run and overtook the man; who was exceeding wroth, out of all measure, so that there was no whit of patience left in him; and he told him how and for what cause he had cut off the foot of the pig; and this with as much fervour and gladness and joy, as one that had done a great service, for the which he ought to be well rewarded. But he, full of anger and beside himself with fury, heaped much abuse upon Brother Juniper, calling him madman and fool, robber and vile thief. And Brother Juniper cared not a whit for these words of such abuse, yet marvelling within himself although he rejoiced to be ill-spoken of: and believed he could not have understood him aright, for it seemed to him matter for rejoicing rather than for wrath; and he repeated the aforesaid story anew, and threw himself upon his neck and embraced and kissed him: and told him how that it had been done wholly for charity's sake, inviting and beseeching him to do likewise with the rest; with such charity and simplicity and humility, that this man coming to himself again threw himself upon the ground not without many tears; and acknowledging the wrong that he had done and said unto the brothers, went and caught the

He humbly confesses his fault

His simplicity and patience

pig and killed it, and having cooked it brought it with great devotion and much weeping to Saint Mary of the Angels, and gave it to those holy brothers to eat, for pity of the wrong he had done to them. And Saint Francis, pondering on the simplicity and the patience of the said holy Brother Juniper in the hour of trial, said to his companions and the others standing round: "Would to God, my brothers, that I had a whole forest of such Junipers!"

II. An instance of the great power of Brother Juniper over the demons

How the demons could not endure the purity of the innocence and deep humility of Brother Juniper, doth clearly appear herein, that on a time a certain man possessed with a devil, contrary to all his wont and with antics most strange, sprang out of the way he was going in, and of a sudden set off running and fled by divers cross-ways for seven miles. And being asked by his kinsfolk, that with great anguish of spirit followed after him, wherefore he had fled away with such strange antics, he answered them: "The reason is this: because that mad fellow Juniper was passing by that way: not being able to endure his presence nor to look on him, I fled away into these woods." And certifying themselves of the truth thereof, they found that Brother Juniper had come along that way, even as the devil had said. Wherefore Saint Francis, when they brought to him those that were possessed to

be healed, if the devils departed not straightway at his command, would say: "If thou come not out of this creature of God straightway, I will send for Brother Juniper to deal with thee": and thereat the demon, fearing the presence of Brother Juniper, and not being able to endure the virtue and humility of Saint Francis, would depart straightway. His power over demons

VII. How, by the device of the devil, Brother Juniper was condemned to the gibbet

On a time the devil, wishing to put Brother Juniper in fear, and vex him with trouble and adversity, went to a very cruel tyrant that was called Nicholas, the which was then at war with the city of Viterbo, and said: "Sir, look well to this your castle, for presently there is coming here a false traitor, sent by the folk of Viterbo, to kill you and set this castle on fire. And in token of the truth thereof, I give you these signs: He will come as a beggar, in garments all torn and patched, and his cowl hanging all tattered on his shoulder; and he will bring with him an awl wherewith to kill you, and a tinder-box to set fire to the castle withal; and if you find not that this be true, on my head be it." At these words Nicholas was all distraught and filled with fear, for he that told him these words seemed to be an honest man. And he gave orders that the watch should be kept with care, and that if this fellow with the signs aforesaid should come, he should be brought before him straightway.

The devil's device

Meantime came Brother Juniper alone, for by reason of his perfection he had leave to go and to stay alone, just as he pleased. Now there met him certain lusty youths, that began to laugh him to scorn and make mock of him. At all this he was not disquieted, but rather led them on to be more merry with him. And when he came to the gate of the castle, and the guards beheld him so ill-favoured, in garments so scant and all torn; for part of his habit for the love of God he had given to the poor on the way, and looked no whit like a Brother Minor; sith the signs that had been given them were so clearly manifest, they dragged him furiously before that tyrant Nicholas. And when they of the household searched him, to see if he had arms to do hurt withal, they found in his sleeve an awl with which he used to mend his sandals; also they found a steel and flint, which he carried to light a fire; for oftentimes he lived in the woods and deserts. Nicholas seeing these signs upon him, according to the testimony of the accusing devil, ordered that his head should be bound tight with cords, and so was it done, and with such cruelty that the cord entered right into his flesh. Then they laid him on the rack, and let stretch and pull his arms and tear his body all in pieces without any mercy. And when they asked him if he wanted to betray the castle and give it up to the people of Viterbo, he answered: "I am the worst of traitors, and undeserving of any good." And when they asked him if with that awl he wished to kill the tyrant Nicholas, and

burn the castle, he answered: "Much worse things should I do, if God permitted it." Then Nicholas, overcome with anger, would no more examine him; but without delay he furiously condemned Brother Juniper, as a traitor and a murderer, to be tied to the tail of a horse, and dragged along the ground to the gibbet and there straightway hanged by the neck. And Brother Juniper made no defence, but as one that for the love of God is well contented in the midst of troubles, was all joyful and glad. And when the command of the tyrant was executed, and Brother Juniper was tied by the feet to the tail of a horse and dragged along the ground, he uttered no complaint or lamentation, but as a gentle lamb that is brought to the slaughter, he went in all humility. At this sight and such sudden justice, ran all the people there to see him executed with such cruel haste, and no one recognised him. Nathless, as God willed, a good man that had seen Brother Juniper seized, and now beheld him so quickly judged to die, ran to the house of the Brothers Minor, and said: "For the love of God, I pray you come quickly, for a poor man hath been taken and sentence passed on him at once, and he hath been led away to die: come, at least that he may give up his soul into your hands, for he seems to me a good man, and hath had no time to confess him; and he hath been led away to the gallows, and he seemeth to keep no care for death nor for the salvation of his soul: oh! come quickly, I beseech you." The Guardian, who was a compassionate man, went at once to

He is led to the gallows

The Guardian intercedes for him

care for the man's salvation: and winning there, he could not find entrance for the press of the folk that had gathered together to see this execution; so he stood and bided his time, and as he waited he heard a voice in the midst of the crowd crying: "Let be, let be, you little rogues, you hurt my legs." At the sound of this voice, with fervour of spirit he threw himself into the midst of them, and took off the covering from the man's face, and then he recognised of a truth that it was Brother Juniper: wherefore for pity's sake the Guardian would have taken off his own habit and have put it on Brother Juniper. And he with cheerful countenance, as though laughing, said: "O Guardian, thou art too fat, and it would look but ill to see you stripped: I will not have it." Then the Guardian with much weeping prayed the executioners and all the people for pity's sake to wait a little while, till he should go and entreat the tyrant for Brother Juniper, if perchance he might pardon him. The executioners and certain folk that stood by, consenting thereunto, believing in sooth that the man was of his kinsfolk, the devout and compassionate Guardian gat him to the tyrant Nicholas with bitter weeping, and said: "My lord, I am in such amazement and distress of mind, as my tongue could never tell; for it seemeth to me that in this land hath been committed this day the greatest sin and the greatest wrong that hath ever been done since the days of our forefathers: and I believe that it has been done through ignorance." Nicholas heard him patiently, and

then asked the Guardian: "What is the great sin and wrong that hath this day been committed in this land?" Replied the Guardian: "My lord, that one of the holiest brothers now in the Order of Saint Francis, unto which thou hast a singular devotion, has by thee been condemned to so cruel a sentence, and of a surety, I ween, without good reason." Quoth Nicholas: "Now tell me, Guardian, who is this? for perchance unwittingly I may have done great wrong." Quoth the Guardian: "He whom thou hast condemned to death, is Brother Juniper, companion of Saint Francis." All horror-stricken, for he had heard of the fame and of the holy life of Brother Juniper, and all pale as though with amaze, the tyrant Nicholas ran with the Guardian, and came to Brother Juniper, and loosed him from the tail of the horse and set him free, and in the presence of all the people fell flat upon his face before Brother Juniper, and with much great weeping confessed his fault for the grievous wrong and for the outrage that he had had done to this holy brother; and added: "I believe of a sooth that the days of my evil life are drawing to an end, sith I have so evil intreated this holy man without any good reason. God for my evil life will suffer me in a few days to die an evil death, albeit I did it unwittingly." Brother Juniper freely forgave the tyrant Nicholas: but God suffered it that a few days thereafter that tyrant Nicholas ended his days with a cruel death. And Brother Juniper departed, leaving all the people edified.

He is set free

IV. How Brother Juniper gave to the poor whatsoever he could, for the love of God

His compassion

Such pity had Brother Juniper for the poor and such compassion, that when he saw any one that was ill clad or naked, he would at once take off his tunic and the cowl of his cloak, and give it to the poor man: wherefore the Guardian commanded him by holy obedience that he should give to no poor person the whole of his tunic or any part of his habit. Now it happened that a few days afterwards he met a poor man half-naked, who asked alms of Brother Juniper for the love of God: to whom with much compassion he said: "I have nothing I could give thee, save my tunic: and my Superior hath by holy obedience enjoined me not to give it nor any part of my habit to any one; but if thou take it off my back, I will not say thee nay." He spoke not to the deaf; for straightway the poor man pulled his tunic off his back and went off with it, leaving Brother Juniper naked. And when he returned to the house and was asked where his tunic was, he answered: "A good man took it off my back and went away with it." And the virtue of compassion still growing in him, he was not content with giving away his tunic, but gave away books and vestments and mantles, and whatsoever he could lay hands upon he would give to the poor. And for this reason the brothers left nothing lying about, for that Brother Juniper gave away everything for the love of God and for His glory.

V. How Brother Juniper cut off certain bells from the altar, and gave them away for the love of God

Once on a time about the Nativity of Christ Brother Juniper was at Assisi, in deep meditation before the altar of the convent, the which altar was right well decorated and adorned; at the prayer of the sacristan, Brother Juniper remained to guard the said altar while the sacristan went away to eat. And as he stood in devout meditation, a poor woman begged alms of him for the love of God. To whom Brother Juniper made answer thus: "Wait a little, and I will see if I can give you something from this altar so richly decked." Now on this altar there was a fringe of gold right lordly, and adorned with little silver bells of great price. Quoth Brother Juniper: "These bells are a superfluity"; and he took a knife and cut them all off from the fringe, and gave them to that poor woman for pity's sake. When the sacristan had eaten three or four mouthfuls, he called to mind the ways of Brother Juniper, and began much to doubt lest Brother Juniper through his zeal of charity might play him some trick with the altar so richly decked, that he had left in his charge. And straightway in doubt he rose from the table and gat him to the church, and looked to see if any of the ornaments of the altar had been removed or carried away; and he saw that all the little bells had been torn off and cut away from the fringe: whereat he was beyond all measure

His charitable zeal

He is harshly reproved

angered and disquieted. Brother Juniper, seeing him so troubled, said: "Be not distressed about those bells, for I have given them to a poor woman that had the greatest need of them, and here they were of no use at all, save only for vain, worldly pomp." Hearing this, the sacristan in great trouble ran straightway through the church and all through the city, if perchance he might find her again: but not only did he find her not, but found no one that had seen her. So he returned to the House, and in a rage took up the fringe and brought it to the General, who was at Assisi, and said: "Father General, I cry justice against Brother Juniper, the which hath spoiled this fringe of mine, the noblest that there was in all the sacristy; now see how he hath handled it and cut off all the silver bells, and tells me that to some poor woman he hath given them away." Replied the General: "It is not Brother Juniper that hath done this, but rather thine own stupidity; for thou shouldest by this time know what manner of man he is: and I tell thee that I am surprised that he hath not given away all the rest; but nathless I will correct him well for this fault." And calling all the brothers together in Chapter, he sent for Brother Juniper: and in the presence of all the community, reproved him very harshly on account of the bells aforesaid; and so wrathful did he grow, that by raising his voice, he became quite hoarse. Brother Juniper cared little and well-nigh nothing for his words, for he took delight in insults, whenever he was well abused: but in

pity for the hoarseness of the General, he began to bethink him of a remedy. And having received the rebuke of the General, Brother Juniper went to the city and ordered and let make a good pottage of flour and butter; and when a good part of the night was passed, he returned and lit a candle and went with the pottage to the General's cell, and knocked. When the General opened the door and saw him standing there with the lighted candle and the pottage in his hand, he asked softly: "What is it?" Replied Brother Juniper: "My father, to-day when thou didst reprove me for my faults, I saw that thy voice grew hoarse, I ween it were through overmuch fatigue; wherefore I bethought me of a remedy, and let make this mess of flour for thee; therefore I pray thee eat it, for I do assure thee, it will ease thy chest and throat." Quoth the General: "What hour is this for you to come disturbing folk?" Replied Brother Juniper: "See, it has been made for thee; I pray thee, make no more ado, but eat it, for it will do thee much good." And the General, being wroth for the lateness of the hour and his importunity, bade him begone, for he had no wish to eat at such an hour, calling him scoundrel and caitiff. Brother Juniper, seeing that neither prayers nor coaxing could aught avail, said: "My father, sith thou wilt not eat, and this pottage hath been made for thee, do this at least for me; hold the candle for me and I will eat it." Then the General, being a pious man and devout, perceiving the piety and simplicity of Brother

The mess of pottage

Brother Juniper's six months' silence

Juniper, and that out of devotion he had done all this, replied: "Come now, since thou wilt have it so, let us eat it, you and I together." And they twain ate the pottage of flour by reason of his importunate charity. And they were refreshed much more by devotion than by the food.

VI. How Brother Juniper kept silence for six months

Once on a time Brother Juniper resolved to keep silence for six months after this manner. On the first day, for the love of the Heavenly Father, on the second day, for the love of Jesu Christ, His Son. On the third, for the love of the Holy Spirit. On the fourth day, out of reverence for the most holy Virgin Mary; and thus, in order, each day for the love of some saint, he kept the six months in silence.

VII. An example of how to resist the temptations of the flesh

Brother Giles, and Brother Simon of Assisi, and Brother Juniper being on a time gathered together to discourse of God and of the salvation of the soul, quoth Giles unto the other brothers: "How do ye deal with temptations to carnal sin?" Quoth Brother Simon: "I think on the vileness and the shame of sin, and a strong hatred thereof taketh hold on me, and so I escape." Quoth Brother Ruffino: "I throw myself down upon the ground, and continue in

prayer, calling on the mercy of God and the Mother of Jesu Christ, until I feel myself wholly freed." Replied Brother Juniper: "When I am ware of the tumult of the devilish suggestions of the flesh, at once I run and shut the door of my heart, and for the safety of the fortress of my heart, I occupy myself in holy meditations and holy desires: so that, when the carnal suggestion cometh or knocketh at the door of my heart, I answer as it were from within: 'Begone, for the lodging is already ta'en, and no more folk may enter here within': and thus no evil thought is suffered to find entrance within my heart: so that seeing itself conquered, it departs as it were discomfited, not only from me, but from all the country round." Brother Giles answered and said: "Brother Juniper, I hold with thee, for one cannot fight better with the enemy of the flesh than by running away; for the carnal appetite that is a traitor within, and the senses of the body without, make themselves felt as enemies so mighty and so strong, that one cannot conquer save by flight. Therefore he that does not want to fight in any other way, after the toil of battle oft-times gains the victory. Then flee from vice and thou shalt be the conqueror." How to resist temptation

VIII. How Brother Juniper abased himself for the glory of God

Once on a time Brother Juniper desiring utterly to abase himself, stripped himself to his

Brother Juniper's self-abasement

breeches, and making a bundle of his clothes set them upon his head, and thus half-naked entered into Viterbo, and went into the public square to be mocked at. As he stood there, the children and the boys, deeming him out of his senses, made mock of him, throwing mud upon his back, and pelting him with stones, pushing him now here, now there, with many a scoff and jeer; and so tormented and laughed to scorn he stood there a great part of the day; after which he gat him back to the convent. And the brothers seeing him were very angry, chiefly because he had gone all through the city with his bundle on his head, and they reproved him harshly and threatened him. And the one said: "Let us put him in prison"; and the other said: "Let us hang him"; and the rest said: "No punishment ye might devise could be too great for so bad an example as he has set this day, to his shame and that of all the Order." And Brother Juniper, full of joy, replied in all humility: "Well and truly have ye spoken, for of these punishments am I worthy and of much more."

IX. How Brother Juniper played see-saw to abase himself

On a time as Brother Juniper was going to Rome, where the fame of his sanctity was already spread abroad, many Romans through their great devotion went out to meet him: and Brother Juniper seeing so many people coming, bethought him how he might turn their devotion into scorn

and derision. There were two children there, playing at see-saw, to wit, they had put one log across another log, and each sat at his own end and so went up and down. Brother Juniper went and put one of these children off the log, and got up himself, and began to see-saw up and down. Meanwhile the folk came up and marvelled to behold Brother Juniper a-see-sawing: none the less with great devotion they saluted him and waited for him to finish his game of see-saw, so as to bear him company with all honour to the convent. And Brother Juniper paid little heed to their salutations, their reverence, and their waiting for him, but took much great pains with his see-sawing. And waiting thus for some time, certain among them began to be annoyed, and said: "What mad fellow is this?" Others knowing his ways, grew in greater devotion; nathless they all went away and left Brother Juniper on the see-saw. And when that they were all gone, Brother Juniper remained altogether conforted, because he had seen some folk that made a mock at him. So he went on his way and entered into Rome with all meekness and humility, and came to the convent of the Brothers Minor. He comes to Rome

X. *How Brother Juniper once cooked a fortnight's food for the brethren*

On a time when Brother Juniper was staying in a very small House belonging to the brothers, it befell that for a certain reason all the brothers

He acts as cook

had to go out, and Brother Juniper remained in the house alone. Quoth the Guardian: "Brother Juniper, we are all going out, and therefore see to it that when we return, you have cooked a little food for the refreshment of the brothers." Replied Brother Juniper: "Right willingly, leave that to me." All the brothers having gone out, as hath been said, quoth Brother Juniper: "What unprofitable trouble is this, that one brother should be lost in the kitchen, and kept away from all prayer? Of a surety, now that I am left behind this time to cook, I will make ready so much that all the brothers, and even were there more of them, will have enough for a fortnight." And so with all diligence he went into the country, and begged for several large cooking-pots, and got fresh meat and dried fowls, eggs, and herbs, and begged for firewood in plenty, and put them all on the fire, to wit, the fowls with their feathers on, and the eggs in their shells, and all the rest in like fashion. When the brothers were come back to the house, one that was well aware of Brother Juniper's simplicity, went into the kitchen, and saw so many great pots on an enormous fire; and he sat him down and looked on in amazement, but said nothing at all, watching with what care Brother Juniper did his cooking. Because the fire was very fierce and he could not well get near to skim the pots, he took a plank and with a rope tied it tight to his body, and then kept jumping from one pot to another, that it was a joy to look at him. Having watched it all with great delight, that brother

left the kitchen, and found the other brothers, and said to them: "I can assure you, Brother Juniper is making a marriage-feast." But the brothers took his words as a jest. And Brother Juniper lifted the pot from the fire and let ring the dinner-bell; and the brothers sat them down to table, and he came into the refectory with his dishes, all red with his exertions and the heat of the fire, and said to the brothers: "Eat well: and then let us all go to prayer, and let no one think any more of cooking for a while; for I have cooked so much food to-day, that I shall have enough for more than a fortnight." And Brother Juniper set his stew on the table before the brothers, and there is not a pig in all the land of Rome so famished as to have eaten it. But Brother Juniper cried up his dishes, for to find a customer; and seeing that the brothers were eating naught thereof, said: "Now these fowls are strengthening to the brain, and this stew will refresh the body, it is so good." And while the brothers were full of amazement and devotion to see the devotion and simplicity of Brother Juniper, the Guardian being wroth with such stupidity and the waste of so much good food, reproved him roughly. Then Brother Juniper threw himself upon the ground and kneeled before the Guardian, and humbly confessed his fault to him and all the brothers, saying: "I am the worst of men; such a one committed such and such a crime, and had his eyes put out; but I deserve it more than he: such a one for his wickedness was hung, but I deserve it much more

A fortnight's food wasted

Brother Juniper goes to Assisi

for my evil deeds: sith I have wasted so many of the good things of God and of the Order." And so all sorrowfully he went away, and all that day he did not show himself where any of the brothers were. Then quoth the Guardian: "My brothers most dear, if only we had it, I would that every day this brother spoiled as much as he hath to-day, if so he might be edified, for great simplicity and charity have made him do this thing.

XI. How Brother Juniper went on a time to Assisi for his own confusion

On a time when Brother Juniper was dwelling in the Valley of Spoleto, being ware that there was a great festival at Assisi and that much folk was winning there with great devotion, there came to him the wish to go to that festival; and behold! Brother Juniper stripped himself to his breeches and so set out, passing through Spoleto right through the middle of the town, and came to the convent. The brothers being much disquieted and scandalised, reproved him full harshly, calling him madman and fool, crying out against him that he would bring ruin on the Order of Saint Francis, and ought to be chained up as a lunatic. And the General, who was then in the convent, let call all the brothers and Brother Juniper, and in the presence of the whole community gave him a harsh and severe reproof. And after many words of sternest condemnation, he said to Brother Juniper: "Thy

fault is such, and is so grievous, that I know not what fitting penance to lay on thee." Replied Brother Juniper, as one that delighted in his own confusion: "Father, I will tell thee one: to wit, that in the same manner as I came hither, so for penance sake I should return to the place whence I started for to come to this festival." Brother Amazialbene dies

XII. How Brother Juniper was rapt in ecstasy while celebrating the Mass

As Brother Juniper on a time was hearing Mass with much devotion, he was rapt in ecstasy with mind uplifted for a long time. And having been left in a room far removed from the brothers, coming to himself again, he began with great fervour to say: "O my brothers, who is there so exalted in this life that would not gladly carry a basket of dung through all the world, if he had given him a whole house full of gold?" And he said: "Alas, that we are not willing to endure a little shame to gain the blessed life."

XIII. Of the sorrow that Brother Juniper felt at the death of his companion, Brother Amazialbene

Brother Juniper had as his companion a brother named Amazialbene, whom he very dearly loved. This man possessed in the highest degree the virtues of patience and obedience;

Brother Juniper's grief

for, if he were beaten for the whole day long, he would never murmur nor complain with a single word. He was oft-times sent to houses where the community was hard to live with, at whose hands he suffered much persecution: the which he endured most patiently, without any murmuring. According to the bidding of Brother Juniper, he would weep and laugh. Now this Brother Amazialbene, as it pleased God, died in the best repute: and Brother Juniper hearing of his death, felt such sorrow in his soul as he had never had in all his life from any earthly cause. And thuswise did he show forth the great bitterness that he felt within, and said: "Woe is me! wretched man that I am, for now is no good thing left to me; and the world is undone through the death of my sweet and dearest brother, Amazialbene!" And he said: "If it were not that I should not be able to take peace with the brothers, I would go to his grave and take up his head; and out of his head I would make two porringers; one of which I would always eat out of, in memory of him and for my devotion's sake: and from the other I would drink, whenever I was thirsty and wished to drink."

XIV. Of the hand that Brother Juniper saw in the air

Brother Juniper being on a time at prayer and thinking perhaps great things of himself, there appeared to him a hand in the air above him, and

with the ears of his body he heard a voice, that spake to him thus: "O Brother Juniper, without this hand thou canst do nothing." Whereat he at once arose, and lifting up his eyes and turning them heavenward, said in a loud voice, as he ran through the convent: "'Tis true indeed, 'tis true indeed." And these words he said again and again for a good long time. A hand appears to him

XV. An example of Brother Leo, how Saint Francis bade him wash the stone

In the mount of Alvernia, as Saint Francis was speaking with Brother Leo, quoth Saint Francis: "Brother little sheep, wash this stone with water." Brother Leo was quick, and washed the stone with water. Quoth Saint Francis with great joy and gladness: "Wash it with wine"; and so was it done. "Wash it," quoth Saint Francis, "with oil"; and even so was it done. Quoth Saint Francis: "Brother little sheep, wash this stone with balsam." Replied Brother Leo: "O sweet father, how can I find balsam in so wild a place as this?" Replied Saint Francis: "Know, brother little sheep of Christ, that is the stone whereon Christ did sit when He appeared on a time to me here; and therefore have I said to thee four times, Wash it; and keep silence; for Jesu Christ hath promised unto me four special graces for my Order. The first is that all they that shall love my Order with their whole heart, and the brothers that shall persevere, shall by the grace of God

The four special graces to the Order

make a good end. The second is that the persecutors of this Order shall notably be punished. The third is that no wicked man shall be able to remain long in this Order, if so be he continue in his wickedness. The fourth is that this Order shall endure even unto the last judgment."

The life of the blessed Brother Giles, the companion of St Francis

I. How Brother Giles and three companions were received into the Order of the Minors

SEEING that the examples of holy men do put in the minds of devout hearers to despise the fleeting joys of earth, and that they have wherewith to stir up the desire of eternal salvation: to the honour of God and His most worshipful Mother Our Lady, holy Mary, and for the profit of all that may hear the same, I will speak certain words touching the working which the Holy Spirit hath worked in our holy Brother Giles, the which, being still in the secular habit, and being touched of the Holy Spirit, began within himself to consider how in all his works he might please God alone. About this time did Saint Francis, like a new herald of God sent as an ensample of godly life, humility and holy penitence, two years after his conversion, draw and attract to the observance of gospel poverty a certain man adorned with marvellous prudence and very rich in temporal goods, named Messer Bernard; and also Peter Cattani; so that by the counsel of Saint Francis they distributed unto the poor, for the love of God, all their worldly treasures, and took to themselves the glory of patience and of gospel perfectness,

Brother Giles

Brother Giles meets St Francis

and the habit of the Brothers Minor; and with exceeding great fervour they promised to observe the Rule all the days of their life, and even so did they in all perfection. Eight days after the conversion set forth above and the distribution of their goods to the poor, whileas Brother Giles was still wearing the secular garb, beholding how those noble knights of Assisi despised the world, so that the whole country round was in amazement, being all afire with love divine, on the following day, which was the feast of Saint George, in the year twelve hundred and nine, very early in the morning, as one that was careful for his salvation, he went to the church of Saint Gregory, where was the convent of Saint Clare; and when he had done his prayers, being much desirous to see Saint Francis, he went to the lepers' hospital, where he lived with Brother Bernard and Brother Peter Cattani, dwelling apart in a hut in the deepest humility. And being come unto a cross-way, and not knowing by which way to go, he lifted up his prayer to Christ, the precious Guide, who led him to the said hut by the straight way. And as he pondered on that for the which he had come, Saint Francis met him, as he was walking in the wood, whither he had come to pray; then straightway he threw himself on the ground on his knees before Saint Francis, and humbly besought him for the love of God to take him as one of his companions. Saint Francis, gazing on the devout aspect of Brother Giles, answered and said: "Brother most dear, God hath shown

Himself exceeding gracious unto thee. If the emperor were to come to Assisi and desire to make a certain citizen his knight or private chamberlain, ought not such a one to be exceeding glad? How much more oughtest thou not to rejoice that God hath chosen thee out to be His knight and well-beloved servant, to observe the perfection of the Holy Gospel? be thou therefore steadfast and firm in the vocation whereto God hath called thee." And he took him by the hand and lifted him up, and brought him into the little house aforesaid; and he called Brother Bernard, and said: "The Lord God hath sent us a good brother, for whom we should all rejoice in the Lord; let us eat together in charity." And when that they had eaten, Saint Francis went with the said Giles to Assisi, for to get cloth to make the habit for Brother Giles. They found by the way a poor woman that asked alms of them for the love of God; and not knowing how to relieve the poor woman, Saint Francis turned towards Brother Giles with an angelic countenance, and said: "For the love of God, dear brother, let us give this mantle to the poor woman." And Brother Giles obeyed the holy Father with so ready a heart that it seemed to him he saw that alms fly at once to heaven, and Brother Giles flew with it straight to heaven: so that he felt within himself joy unspeakable and a fresh renewing of spirit. When Saint Francis had got the cloth and made the habit, he received Brother Giles into the Order, and

St Francis receives him into the Order

They go to March of Ancona

he was one of the most glorious Religious that the world had at that time in the contemplative life. After the reception of Brother Giles, Saint Francis went with him straightway to the March of Ancona, singing with him glorious praises of the Lord of heaven and earth; and he said to Brother Giles: "Son, our Order will be like unto the fisher, that casts his net into the sea and gathers a multitude of fishes, and the large he keeps and leaves the small in the water." Brother Giles marvelled at this prophecy, for as yet there were in the Order only three brothers and Saint Francis; and albeit Saint Francis did not yet preach publicly to the people, yet as he went by the way he admonished and corrected the men-folk and the women-folk, saying lovingly to them these simple words: "Love and fear God, and do fit penance for your sins." And Brother Giles would say: "Do what this my spiritual Father saith unto you, for he speaketh right well."

II. How Brother Giles went to Saint James the Great

As time wore on, Brother Giles, by leave of Saint Francis, went on a time to Saint James the Great in Galicia, and in all that journey only once did he suffer hunger by reason of the great dearth that was in all the country. For as he went along asking alms and finding none that would show him charity, in the evening he lighted by chance on a threshing-floor, wherein

had been left some dry beans, the which he gathered up, and these were his evening meal; and there he slept the night, for of his own will he dwelt in solitary places and remote from other folk, that he might the better give himself up to prayers and vigils. And through this meal he was so much strengthened by God, that if he had eaten of divers dishes, he deemed he could not have found so much refreshment therein. As he went on his way, he found by the road-side a poor man that asked an alms for the love of God. And Brother Giles full of charity, seeing that he had naught else save the habit on his back, cut off the cowl from his old cloak, and gave it to the poor man for the love of God; and thus for twenty days together he journeyed on without a cowl. And as he was coming back through Lombardy, he was called by a man, to whom he went right willingly, thinking to receive an alms of him: and when he stretched out his hand, that other put therein a pair of dice, inviting him to play. Brother Giles made answer right humbly: "God forgive thee, my son." So, as he took his way through the world, he suffered much mocking, and bore it all with a tranquil mind. Brother Giles' charity

III. After what fashion Brother Giles led his life when he went to the Holy Sepulchre

Brother Giles went to visit the Holy Sepulchre of Christ, by leave of Saint Francis, and came to the port of Brindisi, and there

He visits the Holy Sepulchre

he tarried many days by reason of there being no ship ready. And Brother Giles, desiring to live by the labour of his hands, begged for a pitcher, and filling it with water went crying through the city: "Who lacks water?" And by his labour he earned bread and such things as be needful for the life of the body, both for himself and for his companion; and then he went over-sea, and visited the Holy Sepulchre of Christ and the other holy places, with great devotion. And coming back again, he tarried in the city of Ancona for many days; and for that he was wont to live by the labour of his hands, he made baskets of rushes and sold them, not for money, but for bread for himself and his companion, and for the self-same wage he carried the dead for the burying. And when this failed him, he returned to the table of Jesu Christ, begging alms from door to door. And so with much toil and poverty, he returned to Saint Mary of the Angels.

IV. How Brother Giles praised obedience more than prayer

On a time a certain brother was at prayer in his cell, and the guardian sent to him bidding him by holy obedience go and beg for alms. Whereat straightway he gat him to Brother Giles, and said: "My father, I was at prayer, and the guardian has bidden me go and beg for bread: and to me it seemeth to be better to continue in prayer." Replied Brother Giles: "My son, hast thou not yet learned or understood what

manner of thing is prayer? True prayer is to do the will of one's Superior; and it is a sign of great pride in one who hath put his neck under the yoke of holy obedience, if on any account he avoid it, to the end that he may work his own will, thinking thereby to act more perfectly. The Religious who is perfectly obedient is like a rider mounted on a powerful horse, through whose strength he goes boldly on his way; but on the contrary the disobedient, complaining, and unwilling Religious, is like a man mounted on a lean and weak and vicious horse, for after doing a little work it is left behind either dead or taken by the enemy. I tell thee that if a man were so devout and so uplifted in soul as to speak with Angels, and while thus speaking were called by his Superior, he ought straightway to leave the converse of the Angels and be obedient unto him that is set over him."

Obedience more than prayer

V. How Brother Giles lived by the labour of his hands

Brother Giles being on a time in a convent at Rome, desired to live by the work of his hands, as had been his wont ever since he entered the Order, and he did after this manner. In the morning early he heard a Mass with much devotion: then he went to the wood, which was eight miles distant from Rome, and brought back on his shoulders a bundle of wood, and sold it for bread and other things to eat. One time among others, as he was returning with a load of wood, a woman wished to buy it

Brother Giles' manner of living

of him; and having made a bargain and fixed the price, he carried it to her house. The woman, despite the bargain she had made, seeing that he was a Religious, gave him more than she had promised him. Quoth Brother Giles: "Good woman, I would not that the vice of greed should overcome me: therefore will I take no more than the price that I have bargained for with thee." So not only would he take no more, but left half of the price agreed upon, and gat him gone; whereat the woman was filled with exceeding great reverence for him. Thus did Brother Giles alway give good heed to holy honesty in all the work he did for hire. He used to help the labourers gather the olives and strip the vines. Whileas he was one day in the market-place, a certain man wished to let beat his walnut trees, and asked another to beat them for a price: but he made excuse, because it was a long way off, and the trees were very hard to climb. Quoth Brother Giles: "My friend, if thou wilt give me a part of the nuts, I will go with thee to beat them"; and having covenanted with him, he set forth, and having first made the sign of the most holy Cross, with great fear climbed up the walnut tree for to beat it. And when he had done beating, the share that fell to him was so large that he could not carry it in his lap; wherefore he took off his habit, and tying the sleeves and the hood together, he made a sack of it; and his habit thus full of nuts, he put it on his back and carried it to Rome, and gave them all with great joy to the poor, for the love of

God. When the corn was cut, Brother Giles used to go with other poor folk to glean the ears; and if any one offered him a handful of corn, he would answer: "My brother, I have no granary wherein to store it"; and most times he gave the ears away for the love of God. Brother Giles but seldom helped another all day long, for he would bargain to have some time to say the canonical hours and not miss his mental prayers. On a time Brother Giles went to the Fountain of Saint Sixtus to draw water for the monks, and a man asked him to give him to drink. Replied Brother Giles: "And how can I carry the vessel half empty to the monks?" He being angered spake unto Brother Giles many words of insult and of contumely: and Brother Giles returned to the monks much grieved in spirit. Borrowing a large vessel, he returned straightway to the said fountain for water, and found the man again; and said: "My friend, take and drink as much as thy soul desireth, and be not angered for that I deemed it ill-beseeming to carry a vessel half emptied to those holy monks." Then the man repenting him, and constrained by the charity and humility of Brother Giles, confessed his fault, and from that hour forth held him in high reverence. **His humility**

VI. How Brother Giles was miraculously cared for in a time of great need, when by reason of the deep snow he could not go to beg alms

Brother Giles being at Rome in the house of a cardinal, as the time of the greater Lent drew

He is in dire need

nigh, and not finding such peace of mind as he desired, said to the cardinal: "My father, by your leave, I wish to go for the peace of my soul to pass this Lent with my companion in some lonely place." Replied the cardinal: "Well, my brother most dear, and whither wouldest thou go? The famine is full sore: as yet ye know the land but ill; come, be content to continue in my court, for right well pleased shall I be to give you whatsoe'er ye need, for the love of God." Howbeit Brother Giles would fain be gone, and he gat him forth from Rome to a high mountain, where of old had stood a village, and still was found a deserted church that was called Saint Laurence, and he entered therein, he and his companion, and they continued in prayer and in much meditation; they were unknown, and thereby was little reverence and devotion paid to them; wherefore they suffered great want: and therewithal there fell deep snow that lasted many days. They could not go outside the church, and no man sent them aught to eat, nor had they anything with them, and so they remained shut up for three days and nights. Brother Giles seeing that he could not live by the labour of his hands, and that he could not go out to beg for alms, said to his companion: "My brother most dear, let us cry unto the Lord with a loud voice, that of His pity He may provide for us in this great extremity and need; for certain monks being in great need, cried unto God, and the Divine Providence supplied their wants." So after

their example they gave themselves up to prayer, beseeching God with all their hearts that He would send them help in their great need. And God, who is all-pitiful, had regard unto their faith and devotion and simplicity and fervour, after this fashion. A certain man that was looking towards the church in which Brother Giles and his companion were, being inspired of God, said within himself: "It may be that in yon church are some good persons doing penance, who by reason of the snow that hath so much fallen, cannot supply their needs, and by reason thereof may die of hunger." And urged on by the Holy Spirit, he said: "Of a surety I will go and see whether my imagination be true or not"; and taking some bread and a bottle of wine, he set out upon his way; and with exceeding great difficulty he came to the church aforesaid, where he found Brother Giles and his companion praying most devoutly; and they were so consumed with hunger that to all seeming they appeared rather to be dead men than alive. He had great compassion on them, and when they were refreshed and comforted, he returned and told unto his neighbours the need and the distress of these brothers, and prevailed on them and prayed them for the love of God to make provision for them; so that many persons, following his example, brought them bread and wine and other needful viands, for the love of God; and all through that Lent they took such order

His wants miraculously supplied

Brother Giles dies

among themselves that in their need they were provided for. And Brother Giles pondering on the mercy of God and the charity of those folk, said to his companion: "My brother most dear, even now have we prayed unto God to provide for us in our need, and our prayers have been heard: wherefore it is fitting that we give Him thanks and glory, and pray for them that have nourished us with their alms, and for all Christian people." And for his great fervour and devotion, God gave such grace unto Brother Giles that many through his example left this blind world, and many others whose hearts were not turned to the religious life, did much great penance in their own homes.

VII. Of the day of the death of the holy Brother Giles

On the vigil of Saint George at the hour of Matins, when two and fifty years had passed away, for that he had received the habit of Saint Francis on the first day of the month, the soul of Brother Giles was received by God into the glory of Paradise, to wit, on the festival of Saint George.

VIII. How a holy man, being at prayer, saw the soul of Brother Giles pass into life eternal

A certain good man being at prayer, what time Brother Giles passed away from this

life, saw his soul, together with a multitude of souls, come forth out of Purgatory and rise up into heaven: and Jesu Christ come to meet the soul of Brother Giles, and, with a great company of Angels and all those souls, ascend with sweet melodies into the glory of Paradise. **His soul ascends to Paradise**

IX. How by the merits of Brother Giles, the soul of a friend of a certain Preaching Brother was set free from the pains of Purgatory

When Brother Giles lay sick, so that he had but a few days to live, a Brother of Saint Dominic fell sick unto death. Now this man had a friend that was also a brother: who seeing that he drew nigh unto death, said to this sick brother: "My brother, I desire that, if God give thee leave, thou return to me after thy death and tell me in what state thou mayest be." So the sick man promised to return, if it were possible: now he and Brother Giles died on the self-same day, and after his death he appeared to the other Preaching Brother, and said: "It is the will of God that I keep my promise to thee." Said the living brother to the dead: "How is it with thee?" Replied the dead man: "It is well, for I died on the very day whereon there passed away from this life a holy Brother Minor, named Brother Giles, unto whom, by reason of his great sanctity, Jesu Christ granted that he should lead to Paradise all the souls that were in Purgatory, among the which was I, in great

His miracles

torment; so by the merits of the holy Brother Giles were they set free." And this said, straightway he disappeared, and that brother revealed the vision unto no man. Then the said brother fell sick; and at once surmising that God had struck him, because he had not revealed the virtue and the glory of Brother Giles, he sent for the Brothers Minor, and there came to him five couples; and when he had called the Preaching Brothers also, with great devotion he set forth unto them the vision aforesaid; and having diligently enquired, they found that they twain had passed away from this life on the self-same day.

X. How God had given graces unto Brother Giles, and of the year of his death

Brother Bonaventura of Bagnoreggio used to say of Brother Giles that God had granted unto him special grace for all such as commended themselves unto him with devout intention in those things that appertain unto the soul. He wrought many miracles in his lifetime and after his death, as is clearly set forth in his Legend; and he passed away from this life unto glory everlasting in the year of our Lord twelve hundred and fifty-two, on the feast of Saint George; and was buried at Perugia in the convent of the Brothers Minor.

Here begin the chapters of sundry goodly sayings and of the teaching of Brother Giles

I. Of vices and virtues

THE grace of God and virtue are a road and a ladder whereby men may climb into Heaven; but vices and sins are a road and a ladder whereby to go down to the depths of hell. Vices and sins are a deadly poison; but virtues and good works are a healing medicine. One grace leadeth on to another, and one vice leadeth on to another. Grace seeketh not praise; but vice cannot endure to be despised. In humility the mind is at rest and peace; patience is her daughter. And holy purity of heart sees God: but true devotion tasteth Him. If thou lovest, thou wilt be loved. If thou servest, thou wilt be served. If thou fearest, thou wilt be feared. If thou doest good unto others, it is fitting that others do good unto thee. But blessed is he that truly loves and seeketh not love in return. Blessed is he that fears and desires not to be feared. Blessed is he that serves and desires not to be served. Blessed is he that doeth good unto others and seeketh not that others do good to him. But sith these things are very high and of great perfectness, therefore the foolish cannot know them or attain unto

His sayings

His teachings

them. Three things are exceeding high and useful, the which whoso hath, shall never fall. The first is that thou willingly endure with gladness every tribulation that may come to thee, for the love of Jesu Christ. The second is that thou humble thyself every day in all things whatsoever thou doest and in all things that thou lookest upon. The third is that faithfully with all thy heart thou love that highest, heavenly, unseen good, which none may look upon with the eyes of the body. Those things that are despised and reviled by worldly men, are of a sooth more acceptable and pleasing to God and to His Saints, and those that are more loved and more honoured and more desired by worldly men, these are more despised and contemned and hated by God and by His Saints. This foul unfitness proceedeth from human ignorance and wickedness; for miserable man loveth rather the things that he should hate, and hateth the things that he should love. On a time Brother Giles asked another brother, saying: "Tell me, dear brother, hast thou a good soul?" Replied the brother: "I wot not if I have or no." Then said Brother Giles: "My brother, I would have thee know that holy contrition, and holy humility, and holy charity, and holy devotion, and holy joy, make the soul good and blessed."

II. Of Faith

All the things that can be thought of by the heart, or said with the tongue, or seen with the

eyes, or touched with the hands, all are as naught in respect and in comparison of those things that cannot be thought of, nor seen, nor touched. All the Saints, and all the wise men that have passed away, and all they that are in the present life, and all they that shall come after us, that have spoken or written, or shall speak or write of God, will never show forth nor will ever be able to show forth, concerning God so much as a grain of millet, in respect and comparison of the heaven and the earth, and even a hundred thousand times less. For all that is written concerning God, speaketh as one stammering, even as the mother that prattles to her babe, that would not understand her words, if she spake in other fashion. On a time Brother Giles said to a judge that was of the world: "Dost thou believe that the gifts of God are great?" Replied the judge: "I do believe." Whereat Brother Giles said: "I will show thee how thou dost not faithfully believe," and bespake him thus: "What is the worth of all thy possessions in this world?" Replied the judge: "They are worth, may be, a thousand pounds." Quoth Brother Giles: "Wouldest thou give these thy possessions for ten thousand pounds?" Replied the judge without delay, saying: "Of a sooth would I give them right willingly": and Brother Giles said: "Verily all the possessions of this world are as naught in respect of the things of heaven: then wherefore dost thou not give these thy possessions unto Christ, that thou mayest gain those that be celestial and eternal?"

The immensity of God

The mercy of God infinite

Then the judge, wise in the foolish science of the world, answered the pure and simple Brother Giles, full of the wisdom of divine foolishness, saying: "Dost thou believe, Brother Giles, that any man worketh with the works of his hands in such measure as he believeth in his heart?" Replied Brother Giles: "Know of very sooth, my dearly beloved, that all the Saints have studied to fulfil in their works all that they could know to be the will of God, according to the measure of their power; and all that they could not fulfil with the working of their hands, they fulfilled with the holy desires of their will; in such wise that they supplied by the desire of their souls that which was lacking in the work of their hands, and so they came short in nothing." Then quoth Brother Giles: "If there were a man possessed of perfect faith, in a short time he would come to a state of perfectness, wherein he would receive full certainty of his salvation. The man that with firm faith looketh for this eternal and loftiest and highest good, what hurt or harm could any earthly trouble in this present life do to him? And the wretched man that waiteth for eternal woe, what blessing can any prosperity or temporal good in this world bring to him? Nathless, however great a sinner a man may be, he should not therefore despair, so long as he liveth, of the infinite mercy of God, for there is no tree in the world so thorny or so gnarled or so knotty that men cannot smooth it and polish it and trim it and make it fair to see; and even so there is not

a man in this world so wicked or so great a sinner that God cannot convert him and adorn him with singular graces and with manifold gifts of virtue." Pride the cause of all falls

III. Of holy humility

No man may come into any knowledge and understanding of God, save by the virtue of holy humility; for the straight path that goeth up is the path that leadeth down. All the dangers and the grievous falls that have happed in this world, have come from none other cause save from the lifting up of the head, to wit the mind, in pride: and the same is proved by the fall of the devil who was cast out of heaven, and by the fall of our first parent, to wit Adam, who was driven out of Paradise by reason of the lifting up of his head, to wit his disobedience, and likewise by the Pharisee, whereof Christ speaketh in the Gospel, and by many other examples. And so contrariwise, all the great blessings that have befallen this world, have all proceeded forth from the bowing of the head, to wit the humbling of the mind, even as is proved by the blessed most humble Virgin Mary, and by the Publican, and by the holy Thief upon the Cross, and by many other examples in the Scriptures. And therefore it would be well if we could find some heavy and grievous weight, the which we might always carry tied to our neck, to the end that it might be ever bent down, to wit, that it might ever make us humble. A certain brother asked

In praise of humility

Brother Giles: "Tell me, father, in what manner we may flee from this pride." Whereunto answered Brother Giles: "My brother, be thou assured of this, to wit, that thou canst never hope to be able to flee from pride, unless thou first put thy mouth where now thou hast thy feet; but if thou dost ponder well the loving-kindnesses of God, then wilt thou understand that rightly art thou bound to bend down thine head. And likewise, if thou dost well bethink thee of thy faults and of the many offences thou hast committed against God, thou wilt have full reason to humble thyself. But woe unto those that desire to be honoured for their wickedness sake. One degree of humility is found in the man who knoweth that he is the enemy of his own good. One degree of humility is to render unto another the things that are his and not to take them for oneself; to wit, that every good thing and every virtue that man findeth in himself, he should not ascribe unto himself, but only unto God, from whom cometh every grace and every good thing; but every sin and passion of the soul, or whatsoever vice man findeth in himself, he should ascribe unto himself, seeing that it proceedeth from himself and his own wickedness, and not from others. Blessed is the man that knows and deems himself to be vile before God, and so before men! Blessed is he that always judges himself and condemns himself and not another! for then he will not be judged by that terrible and eternal last judgment. Blessed is he that taketh heed to pass under the yoke of obedience

and under the authority of another, as did the holy Apostles, before and after they received the Holy Spirit!" Likewise Brother Giles said: "He who wishes to gain and to possess perfect peace and rest, must needs look on every man as his superior, and must always show himself submissive and inferior to all. Blessed is the man who in his actions and his speech seeketh not to be seen or known, save only in that pure order and in that simple adornment wherewith God hath adorned and ordered him! Blessed is the man who knoweth how to keep and to hide the divine revelations and consolations! for there is no thing so secret but that God reveals it whensoever it pleaseth him. If a man were to be the most perfect and most holy man in the world, and think and believe himself to be the most miserable sinner and the vilest wretch on earth, then in this man would be true humility. Holy humility knoweth not how to talk, and the blessed fear of God knoweth not how to speak." Quoth Brother Giles: "Humility seemeth to me to be like unto a flash of lightning; for even as the lightning striketh a terrible blow, crashing and breaking in pieces and burning up whatsoever it meets, and then the flash is no more to be found; so in like manner humility pierces and scatters and burns and consumes all wickedness and all vice and all sin; and then is found to be naught in itself. The man that possesseth humility, through humility finds grace with God, and perfect peace with his neighbour."

Humility likened to a lightning-flash

IV. Of the holy fear of God

The fear of God

He that fears not, shows that he hath naught to lose. The holy fear of God orders, governs and rules the soul, and maketh it come to grace. If a man possesseth any grace or divine virtue, it is holy fear that keepeth it safe. And whoso hath not yet obtained virtue or grace, holy fear maketh him obtain it. The holy fear of God is a guide to guide us unto godly graces, for it maketh the soul wherein it dwells to attain right soon unto holy virtue and heavenly graces. All creatures that now are fallen in sin, would never have fallen, if they had had the holy fear of God. But this holy gift of fear is not given save unto the perfect, for the more perfect a man is, the more doth he fear and humble himself. Blessed is the man that knoweth that in this world he is in prison, and ever remembereth how grievously he hath offended his Lord! Man should alway stand in great fear of pride, lest it make a thrust at him and make him fall from the state of grace, wherein he stands; for man can never dwell securely, whiles he is in the midst of our enemies; and our enemies are the enticements of this miserable world and our own flesh, the which, together with the demons, ever make war upon the soul. A man should have greater fear of his own wickedness lest it overcome him and lead him astray, than of any other of his enemies. It is impossible for a man to ascend and rise up to any grace or heavenly virtue, or persevere in the same, without holy fear. Whoso

hath not the fear of God, is in danger of perishing and of being altogether lost. The fear of God maketh man to humbly obey and bend his neck under the yoke of obedience; and the more fear a man doth feel, the more fervently doth he pray. No small gift is that of prayer, unto whomsoever it may be given. The virtuous deeds of men, however great they may appear to us, are not accounted or rewarded after our judgment, but after the judgment and good pleasure of God; for God looketh not to the number of the works, but to the measure of the love and humility: and therefore is it safest for us ever to love and fear with humility, and never to trust in ourselves for any good thing, being always suspicious of the thoughts that arise in the mind under the guise of good.

Grace impossible without fear

V. Of holy patience

He that with firm humility and patience doth suffer and endure tribulation, through his burning love for God, will soon attain unto high graces and virtues, and will be lord of this world and will have an earnest of the glorious world to come. Every thing that a man doth, be it good or evil, he doeth it unto himself; wherefore be not disquieted against him in that he doth thee wrong, but rather shouldest thou have humble patience, and only grieve for his sin, having pity on him, and praying God effectually for him. The stronger a man is to suffer and endure injuries and tribulations patiently for the love

The way to Salvation is the way of loss

of God, the greater is he in the sight of God, and no more: and the weaker a man is in enduring pain and adversity for the love of God, the lower is he in the sight of God. If any man praise thee, speaking well of thee, give the glory to God alone; and if any man speak ill of thee and revile thee, do thou help him by speaking ill of thyself and worse. If thou desirest to maintain thine own cause, then study ever to speak ill of it and maintain that of thy neighbour, always blaming thyself and always praising and making sincere excuses for him. When any man wishes to contend and to go to law with thee, do thou, if thou desirest to win, lose thy case, and losing it thou wilt win; for if thou dost wish to go to law for to win, then when thou thinkest thou hast won, thou wilt find that thou hast lost most grievously. Wherefore, my brother, believe of a surety that the straight way to salvation is the way of loss. But when we do not bear tribulations well, then we cannot pursue after the consolations of eternity. A much greater consolation is it and far more meritorious to endure wrongs and revilings patiently without murmuring, for the love of God, than to feed a hundred poor persons and fast every day continuously. But what doth it profit a man, or what joy doth it bring him, to despise himself and afflict his body with long fasts and vigils and scourgings, if he cannot endure a little wrong at the hands of his neighbour? For which cause shall a man receive much more reward and greater merit, than for all the afflictions that he may lay on himself of

his own will; for to endure revilings and injuries from his neighbour in humble patience without murmuring, purgeth away sin much more quickly than a fount of many tears. Blessed is the man that always keeps before the eyes of his mind the remembrance of his sin and of the blessings of God! for he will endure with patience every tribulation and adversity, and therewithal he looketh for great consolations. The man who is truly humble looks not for any merit or reward from God; but studies only how he may please Him in every way, knowing that he is His debtor; and every good thing that he hath, he knoweth that he hath of the goodness of God alone, and not for any merit of his own; and in all adversity, he knoweth that of a surety it hath befallen him for his sins. A certain brother asked Brother Giles, saying: "Father, if in our time there should fall some great adversities and tribulations, what should we do then?" Whereunto replied Brother Giles, saying: "My brother, I would have thee know that if the Lord were to rain down stones and lightning from Heaven, they could not hurt us or do us any harm, if we were such as we ought to be; for if man were truly what he ought to be, every evil and every tribulation would be turned into blessings; for we know what saith the Apostle, that all things work together for good to them that love God; and so likewise to the man of evil will, all good things are turned to evil and to judgment. If thou wilt be saved and go to the glory of heaven, thou must never seek for revenge or justice on any

"All things work together for good to them that love God"

Burdens lightened by submission

creature; for the heritage of the Saints is always to do good and always to receive evil. If thou wert truly to recognize how often and how grievously thou hast offended thy Creator, thou wouldest understand that it is right and just that all creatures should persecute thee and work thee pain and tribulation, for these creatures would be taking vengeance for the offences thou hast committed against thy Creator. A great and high virtue is it for a man to overcome himself, for he that overcometh himself, will overcome all his enemies and will attain unto all good. A much higher virtue would it be, if a man were to suffer himself to be overcome by all men; for then would he be lord over all his enemies, to wit, vices and the devils and the world and his own flesh. If thou wilt be saved, renounce and despise every consolation that the things of the world or mortal creatures can give thee; for more grievous and more frequent are the falls that come through the prosperity and the consolations that spring not up through adversities and tribulations." Once on a time a Religious murmured against his Superior in the presence of Brother Giles, on account of a heavy obedience that he had laid upon him; unto whom quoth Brother Giles: "Dearly beloved, the more thou wilt murmur, the heavier will become thy burden and the harder for thee to bear: and the more humbly and devoutly thou wilt put thy neck under the yoke of holy obedience, the lighter and sweeter will this obedience be for thee to bear. But methinks thou art

not willing to be reviled in this world for the love of Christ, yet dost wish to be honoured with Christ in the world to come; thou art not willing to be persecuted and cursed in this world for Christ's sake, yet in the next world dost wish to be blessed and received by Christ; thou art not willing to labour in this world, but would rest and be at peace in the world to come. Brother, brother, I say unto thee that thou art grievously deceived; for it is by the path of misery and shame and reproach that man cometh unto true celestial honour; and it is by enduring mockings and cursings patiently for the love of Christ, that man cometh unto the glory of Christ. Therefore well saith a proverb of the world that saith: He that gives not what he ought, gets not what he would. Right useful is the nature of the horse; for however fast the horse may run, yet he suffers himself to be ruled, guided, and turned up and down, backwards and forwards, according to the will of the rider; and so likewise ought the servant of God to do, to wit, he should suffer himself to be ruled, guided, bent, and turned, according to the will of his superior, and likewise of any one else, for the love of God. If thou wilt be perfect, study diligently to be full of grace and virtue, and fight valiantly against vices, patiently enduring all adversity for the love of thy Lord, who for love of thee suffered tribulation, affliction, revilings, scourging, crucifixion and death, not through His own fault, nor for His own glory, nor for His own profit, but solely for thy salvation. And

The way to be perfect

Laziness the path that leads to hell

to the end that thou mayest do what I have told thee, do thou take heed above all that thou conquer thyself; for it profiteth a man little to draw and lead souls to God, if he doth not first conquer and draw and lead himself.

VI. Of slothfulness

The man that standeth idle loseth this world and the next; for he brings forth no fruit in himself, and profits not his neighbour. It is impossible for a man to grow in virtue, without carefulness and without much labour. When thou canst stand in a safe place, stand not in a doubtful one: he standeth in a safe place who is careful and anxious and works and labours through God and for the Lord, and not for fear of punishment nor for reward, but for the love of God. The man who refuses to toil and labour for the love of Christ, refuses in very sooth the glory of Christ: and even as carefulness is useful and helpful unto us, so is carelessness ever contrary to us. Like as laziness is the path that leads to hell, ever so is holy carefulness the path that leads to heaven Right careful ought a man to be, to gain and keep the virtues and the grace of God, always working with that grace and virtues faithfully; for oftentimes doth it happen to the man who works not faithfully, that he loseth the fruit for the leaves, or the grain for the straw. To one man God freely granteth the good fruit with few leaves, and to another He giveth both the fruit and the leaves: and some others there be that have neither fruit nor leaves. A weightier matter

doth it seem to be, to know how well to guard and keep discreetly the blessings and graces the Lord doth give, than to know how to obtain them; for, although a man know well how to gain them, yet if he know not how to keep and guard them well, he will never be rich; but others gain little by little and so grow rich, because they guard well their gains and their treasure. O how great a mass of water would the Tiber have collected, if it did not anywhere run away! Man craves of God infinite gifts, without measure and without end; but to his love of God doth he set both measure and end. He that would be loved of God and receive of Him infinite merit without measure or stint, must love God without measure or stint, and always yield him endless service. Blessed is the man that loveth God with all his heart and with all his mind, and always afflicts his body and mind for the love of God, and seeketh no other reward under Heaven save that he may recognise that he is Its debtor. If a man were to fall into great need and poverty, and another man were to say to him: "I will lend thee a very precious thing for the space of three days; and know that if within these three days thou make good use of this thing, thou wilt gain endless treasure so as to be rich for ever": now sure is it that that poor man would be right careful to make good and diligent use of this thing so precious, and much would he study to bring forth good fruit therefrom. So in like manner do I say, that the thing that hath been lent to us

More difficult to keep than to gain riches

Study to make good use of life

by the hand of God, is our body, the which the good God hath lent us for three days; for all our times and years are in comparison as three days. Wherefore if thou wouldest be rich and enjoy the divine sweetness to all eternity, then study to make good use, and to bring forth good fruit, of this thing that the hand of God hath lent, to wit, thy body in this space of three days, to wit, in the brief period of thy life; for if thou art not careful to lay up store in the present life, whileas thou hast time, thou wilt never be able to enjoy those eternal riches nor find holy rest in that celestial peace for evermore. But if all the possessions in the world belonged to one man, who never made use of them nor let others make use of them, what profit or what gain would he have of these things? Of a sooth, he would have no gain or profit at all. But it well might be, that a man should have few possessions and making good use of them find much profit therein, and bring forth fruit enough and to spare, both for himself and for others. Saith a proverb of the world: Never set an empty pot to boil on the fire, in hope that your neighbour will fill it. In like manner God willeth not that any grace should remain empty; for the good God never giveth grace to any man, to the end that he may keep it empty, but rather He giveth it, that man may fill it with the fruit of good works; for a good will sufficeth not, if a man studies not to follow it, and fill it with the fruit of good works. Once on a time a beggar said to Brother Giles: "Father, I pray thee give me

some consolation." Whereat Brother Giles replied: "My brother, study to stand well with God, and straightway wilt thou have the consolation thou dost need; for if a man maketh not ready within his soul a dwelling-place wherein God may rest and dwell, he will never find shelter or rest or true consolation in any creatures. When a man wisheth to do evil, he hath never need of much counsel, for the doing it; but for doing good, many men seek counsel and make long delay." Once on a time quoth Brother Giles to his companions: "My brothers, meseemeth that in these present days there is found no man that is willing to do the things that he seeth to be more profitable, not only for his soul but also for his body. Believe me, my brothers, that in very sooth I could swear, that the more a man doth flee and shun the burden and the yoke of Christ, the more grievous doth he make it to himself, and the weightier and heavier doth he feel it; and the more eagerly a man taketh it upon him, always adding to the weight of his own free will, the lighter doth he feel it and the more sweet to bear. Now may it please God that men may win and gain for themselves in this world the good things of the body, in like measure as they gain those of the soul; seeing that the soul and the body, without doubt, must be joined together, to suffer for ever, or for ever rejoice; to wit, either to suffer pains and torments incalculable for ever and ever in hell, or everlastingly enjoy with the Saints and Angels in Paradise, joys and consolations

The soul and body must be joined to suffer or rejoice

The noblest art is to do good work

unspeakable, through the merits of good works." A certain brother spake thus unto Brother Giles: "Father, meseemeth that we do not yet know how to recognise what is good for us." Whereat Brother Giles replied: "My brother, certain is that every man practises the art that he has learnt, for no man can do good work unless he hath first learnt: wherefore I would have thee know, my brother, that the noblest art in the world is to do good work: and who can know this, unless he first have learnt it? Blessed is the man unto whom no created thing can bring evil! but more blessed is he who from every thing that he sees and hears, receiveth good to the edifying of himself."

VII. Of contempt of the world

"Many sorrows and many woes will that wretched man have, who setteth his desire and his heart and his hope on earthly things, for the which he abandons and loses the things of heaven, and at the last will also lose these things of earth. The eagle flieth high: but if she had a weight tied to her wings, she could no more fly high; so man for the weight of earthly things cannot fly high, to wit, cannot attain to perfection; but the wise man, that tieth the weight of remembrance of death and of judgment to the wings of his heart, cannot by reason of his great fear go astray and fly among the vanities and the riches of this world, the which are the cause of damnation. Every day we see the

men of the world working and toiling much, and setting themselves in great perils of body, for to gain these deceitful riches; and when they have toiled and gained much, in one moment will they die and will leave behind all that they have gained in their life; and therefore must we not trust in this deceitful world, the which leadeth astray every man that believeth therein, sith it is full of lies. But whoso desireth and wisheth to be great and very rich, let him seek after and love the riches and the good things that are eternal, the which always satisfy the soul and never weary it and never grow less. If we do not wish to go astray, let us take example from the beasts and the birds, the which when they are fed, are well content, and seek naught save their life from hour to hour, as they have need: and so should man be content with his bare necessities, with temperance and without superfluity." Brother Giles said that the ants pleased not Saint Francis as did the other animals, by reason of the great care they took in gathering together and storing up abundance of grain at the time of summer for the winter: but he said that the birds pleased him much more, for they never gathered anything together on one day for the other. But the ant setteth us an example that we should not stand idle in the summer time of this present life, lest we be found empty and without fruit in the winter of the last and final judgment.

Beasts and birds, examples of content

VIII. Of holy chastity

Chastity likened to a bright mirror

Our wretched and weak human flesh is like the pig, that ever delighteth to wallow and befoul itself in the mud; deeming the mud its great delight. Our flesh is the devil's knight: for it resists and fights against all those things that are of God and for our salvation. A certain brother asked Brother Giles, saying: "Father, teach me in what manner we may be able to keep ourselves from carnal sin"; whereat Brother Giles replied: "My brother, he who desireth to move a great weight or a large stone to some other place, must needs study to move it more by skill than by force. So we likewise, if we would conquer carnal sins and gain the virtue of chastity, can gain it better by humility and by the good and discreet guidance of our spirit, than by the presumptuous severity and violence of our penances. Every sin troubles and bedims holy, resplendent chastity; for chastity is like unto a bright mirror, that is bedimmed and troubled not only by the touch of filthy things, but also by the breath of man. And it is nowise possible for a man to attain unto any spiritual grace, so long as he is found to be inclined unto carnal lusts; wherefore turn and turn thou where thou wilt, thou will never find any other means whereby to attain unto spiritual grace, save only that thou conquer every carnal sin. Wherefore fight valiantly against thy weak and sensual flesh, that is thy proper enemy and ever seeketh to

gainsay thee night and day. Whoso overcometh the flesh, our mortal enemy, let him be sure that he hath conquered and discomfited all his enemies, and will soon attain unto spiritual grace and every good state of virtue and perfection." Quoth Brother Giles: "Among all the other virtues would I put the virtue of chastity first: for most sweet chastity hath in itself some perfectness of itself alone; but no other virtue can be perfect, lacking chastity." A certain brother asked Brother Giles, saying: "Father, is not the virtue of charity greater and more excellent than that of chastity?" And Brother Giles said: "Tell me, brother, what is there in the whole world more chaste than holy charity?" Oftentimes used Brother Giles to sing this song, to wit: "O holy chastity, How great and good thou art! Truly precious art thou, and thy savour is so sweet, That whoso tastes it not, knows not how excellent it is. Wherefore the foolish know not thy worth." A certain brother asked Brother Giles, saying: "Father, thou that so much commendeth the virtue of chastity, I pray thee expound to me what manner of thing is chastity." Whereat replied Brother Giles: "My brother, I tell thee that the name of chastity belongeth properly to the anxious care and constant watching of the bodily and spiritual senses, preserving them for God alone pure and unstained."

Chastity, the first virtue

IX. Of temptations

The fiercer the battle, the greater the victory

"The great graces that man receives from God, man cannot keep in tranquil peace; for many things spring up that be contrary and disturbing and hostile to these graces, for the more a man is pleasing unto God, the more is he assailed and assaulted by the devils. Therefore a man should never cease to fight, to the end that he may live up to the grace received from God; for the fiercer that the battle be, the more precious will be the crown, if he gain the victory. If we have not many a battle and many a hindrance and many a temptation, we should not be such as we ought to be in the spiritual life. But true it is that if a man walked aright and discreetly in the way of God, he would find nor toil nor weariness in his journey, but the man that walketh in the way of the world will never be able to escape the many toils, weariness, anguish, tribulations, and sorrows, even to the day of his death." Quoth a certain brother unto Brother Giles: "My brother, meseemeth that these two sayings are contrary the one to the other; for in the first thou dost say: The more a man is virtuous and pleasing unto God, the more adversaries hath he and the more battles in the spiritual life; and thereafter thou dost say the contrary, to wit: If a man walked aright and discreetly in the way of God, he would feel nor toil nor weariness in his journey." Whereat Brother Giles, explaining the opposition between these two sayings, answered thus: "My brother, sooth is it that

the devils assail with fierce temptations those that have a good will, more than they do those that have not a good will, to wit, after the mind of God. But the man that walketh discreetly and zealously in the way of God, what toil or weariness or hurt could the devils and all the adversities in the world bring upon him? sith he knows and sees that he sells his wares for a thousand times more than they are worth. But I tell thee yet more surely: He that had been kindled by the fire of love divine, the more he were assailed by sins, the more would he hate and abhor them. The worst devils are wont to run and tempt a man, when he is in a sickness or in any bodily weakness or in any trouble, or in cold or anguish, or hungered or thirsty, or when he hath suffered some wrong or shame or temporal or spiritual loss; for these malicious ones know that in such hours and moments a man is more ready to receive temptations. But I tell thee that for every temptation and every sin that thou shalt overcome, thou wilt gain a virtue; and by overcoming that vice wherewith thou art assailed, thou wilt receive therefore so much the greater grace and the more glorious crown." A certain brother took counsel of Brother Giles, saying: "Father, oft-times am I tempted with a very sore temptation, and many a time I have prayed to God that He would deliver me therefrom; yet the Lord hath not delivered me; give me counsel, Father, what I should do." Whereunto replied Brother Giles: "My brother, the more nobly a king doth furnish his knights with stout and

For every sin overcome a virtue gained

The armed and the unarmed knight

lordly armour, the more stoutly doth he wish them to fight against his enemies, for the love of him." A certain brother asked Brother Giles, saying: "Father, what remedy can I find so as to be able to go to prayers with more willingness and more desire and more fervour? for when I go to prayers, I feel hard and slothful and dry and indevout." To whom Brother Giles replied, saying: "A certain king hath two servants: and the one hath arms wherewith to fight, but the other hath none, and they twain wish to go into the battle and fight against the enemies of the king. He that is armed, entereth into the battle and fighteth valiantly; but the other that hath no arms, saith unto his Lord: 'My Lord, thou seest that I be naked without arms; but for love of thee will I gladly go into the battle, and fight all unarmed as I am.' Then the good king, beholding the love of his faithful servant, saith unto his attendants: 'Go with this my servant, and clothe him with all the arms that he needeth for to fight, that with safety he may enter into the battle; and sign all his arms with my royal sign, that he may be known as my faithful knight.' And even so doth it oft-times happen to a man when he goes to pray, to wit, when he findeth himself to be naked, indevout, lazy and hard of soul; but if he constraineth himself, for the love of God, to enter into the battle of prayer: then our kind king and Lord, seeing the endeavour of His knight, giveth him by the hands of His ministering Angels the devotion and the fervour of good will. Another time doth it

happen that a man will begin some great work of grievous toil, such as to clear and till the ground, or a vineyard, so as to reap fruit in season. And many by reason of the much toil and many vexations grow weary and repent of the work they have begun: but if a man constraineth himself until the season of fruit, then forgetteth he all his weariness and abideth consoled and glad, seeing the fruit that he can enjoy. And so a man that is strong in the hour of temptation, will attain unto many consolations; for after tribulations, saith Saint Paul, are given consolations and the crowns of life eternal: and not only will the reward be given in Heaven to those that resist temptations, but also in this life, as saith the Psalmist: Lord, according to the multitude of my temptations and my griefs, will Thy consolations make glad my soul; so that the greater the temptation and the battle, the more glorious will be the crown." A certain brother asked counsel of Brother Giles touching a certain temptation, saying: "O Father, I am tempted by two most grievous temptations; the one is: so soon as I do any good thing, straightway am I tempted by vain glory; the other is: so soon as I do any evil, I fall into such sadness and such melancholy, that I come well-nigh to despair." Whereunto replied Brother Giles: "My brother, thou dost wisely to bewail thy sin, but I counsel thee to mourn discreetly and temperately, and always to remember that the mercy of God is greater than thy sin. But if the infinite mercy of God receiveth to repentance the man that is a great

Reward for those who resist temptation

Never cease to do good

sinner and sinneth of his own free will, whenas he doth repent, dost thou believe that this good God abandoneth the good sinner that sinned not willingly and now is contrite and penitent? Likewise I counsel thee that thou never cease to do good, through fear of vain glory; for if a man when he wisheth to sow his grain should say: 'I will not sow; for if I sowed, perchance the birds would come and eat it up,' and so saying should not sow his seed, sure is it that he would reap no fruit that year. But if he sows his seed, albeit the birds eat some of it, yet the greater part the labourer reaps. So when a man is assailed by vain glory, if so be that he doth not good deeds for vain glory's sake, but striveth ever against it, I say that he loseth not the merit of the good deeds that he doth, by reason of his being tempted." A brother said unto Brother Giles: "Father, it is written that Saint Bernard on a time repeated the seven Penitential Psalms with such peace of mind and such devotion that he thought of nothing else save only the proper meaning of the aforesaid psalms." Whereat Brother Giles answered thus: "My brother, I deem that there is more valour in a lord that holds his castle when it is besieged and assaulted by his enemies, and defends himself so valiantly that he suffers no one of his enemies to find entrance therein, than there is in one that lives at peace and suffereth no let."

X. *Of holy penitence*

Much ought a man always to afflict and mortify his body, and willingly endure all wrong, tribu-

lation and anguish, sorrow, shame, contempt, reproach, adversity and persecution, for the love of our good Lord and Master, Jesu Christ, who hath set us an example in His own self: for from the first day of His glorious Nativity until His most holy Passion he always endured anguish, tribulation, sorrow, contempt, trouble and persecution, all for our salvation. And therefore, if we would come unto a state of grace, we must needs walk, so far as in us lies, in the footsteps of our good Master, Jesu Christ. A certain man of the world asked Brother Giles, saying: "Father, how can we that dwell in the world attain unto a state of grace?" Whereunto Brother Giles replied: "My brother, a man must first of all mourn for his sins with a contrite heart; then should he confess to the priest with bitterness and sorrow of heart accusing himself alone, without concealment or excuse; then should he perfectly fulfil the penance laid on him by his confessor: and likewise should guard against all vice and sin and every occasion of sin; and still more, should he exercise himself in good works of virtue towards God and towards his neighbour; and by so doing will a man come unto a state of grace and virtue. Blessed is the man that mourneth continually for his sins, always bewailing night and day with bitterness of heart, for the offences that he hath committed against God! Blessed is the man that hath always before the eyes of his mind the afflictions, the pains and the sorrows of Jesu Christ, and for love of Him neither desires nor finds any temporal

How to attain unto a state of grace

Prayer the sum of all good

consolation in this bitter and tempestuous world, until he cometh to the celestial consolation of eternal life, wherein all his desires shall be fulfilled with joy!"

XI. Of holy prayer

Prayer is the beginning and the middle and the end of all good; prayer illumineth the soul, and thereby doth the soul distinguish good from evil. Every man that is a sinner should make this prayer every day continually, with fervour of heart: to wit, should pray humbly to God to give him a perfect knowledge of his own wretchedness and of his sins, and of the loving kindnesses that he hath received and still receiveth from the good God. But the man that knows not how to pray, how can he come unto the knowledge of God? And all those that would be saved, if they be folk of true intelligence, must needs be converted in the end to holy prayer. Quoth Brother Giles: "If there was a man that had a son who had done so much evil that he had been condemned to death or been banished from the city, of a surety with all his might this man would strive both day and night and every hour to save the life of this his son, or bring him back from banishment, making many prayers and supplications, and giving gifts and presents, as much as he could, both of himself and through others, his friends and relatives. Then if a man doth so much for his son, who is but mortal; how much more careful ought a man to be, to pray to God and make others also pray to Him, both

good men in this world and His Saints in the next, on behalf of his own soul, which is immortal, when it hath been banished from the celestial city or hath been damned to death eternal for its many sins!" Quoth a certain brother unto Brother Giles: "Father, meseemeth that much ought a man to mourn and be full sorrowful, when he cannot have grace of devotion in his prayers." Whereunto replied Brother Giles: "My brother, I counsel thee to go gently, gently; for, if thou hadst a little good wine in a cask, and in the cask the lees were still underneath this good wine, of a surety thou wouldest not shake or move that cask, to the end that the good wine be not mixed with the lees; and so I say: so long as prayer be not separated from every sinful and carnal lust, it will not receive divine consolation; for the prayer that is mixed with the lees of fleshly lust is not clear in the sight of God. Wherefore should a man strive, as far as he may, to free himself from all the lees of sinful lust; to the end that his prayer may be pure in the sight of God, and he may thereby receive divine devotion and consolation." A certain brother asked Brother Giles, saying: "Father, how comes it that when a man is praying to God, he is much more tempted, assailed and tormented than at any other time?" Whereat Brother Giles answered thus: "When a man pleadeth his cause before the judge, and goeth for to tell his reasons to the judge, as it were asking of him advice and help: whenas his adversary is ware of it, he straightway appeareth

Devotion in prayer

Bravely resist all temptation

to oppose and to resist the plea of the other, and hindereth him sore, as it were gainsaying his every word; and so likewise doth it befall, when a man goeth to pray, asking God to help his cause; and then doth straightway appear his adversary, the devil, with his temptations, for to resist him sore and to gainsay him, and to put forth all his strength and art and subtility, to hinder his prayer, so that his prayer may not be acceptable in the sight of God, and the man gain no merit from the prayer nor any consolation. And this may we see quite clearly; for when we speak of worldly things, at that time we suffer no temptation nor distraction of mind, but if we go to prayer, to gladden and comfort the soul with God, straightway shall we feel the mind pierced with divers arrows, to wit, with divers temptations, which the devils shoot at us for to make our minds confused, so that the soul may have no delight or consolation in its converse with God."

Brother Giles said that "a man in prayer should do as doth a good knight in the battle; who albeit he be pierced or wounded by his enemy, doth not therefore straightway leave the battle, but resisteth manfully so as to gain the victory over his enemy, to the end that having gained the victory, he may rejoice in his glory and find comfort therein: but if he were to leave the battle, so soon as he were stricken or wounded, of a sooth would he be put to confusion and shame and dishonour. So likewise ought we to do; to wit, not cease from prayer for every temptation, but bravely resist; for blessed is the

man that endureth temptation, as saith the Apostle; for overcoming, he shall receive the crown of life eternal: but if a man by reason of temptations ceaseth from prayer, of a surety will he be confounded, defeated and discomfited by his enemy, the devil." A certain brother said to Brother Giles: "Father, I have seen certain men, that have received of God the gift of devotion and of tears at the time of prayer, but I cannot feel any of these graces, when I pray to God." Whereunto replied Brother Giles: "My brother, I counsel thee to labour humbly and faithfully in thy prayer; for the fruits of the earth cannot be had without toil and without labour first being spent thereon; and even after this labour, the desired fruit doth not come at once, before its due season hath arrived: even so God giveth not these graces unto a man in prayer at once, before the fitting time hath come, and before his mind is purged from every carnal affection and sin. Wherefore, my brother, labour humbly in prayer; for God, who is all-good and gracious, knoweth and discerneth all things best: when the time and the season is come, in His loving kindness He will give thee much fruit of consolation." Another Brother said unto Brother Giles: "What dost thou do, Brother Giles? what dost thou do, Brother Giles?" And he replied: "I do that which is evil"; and the brother said: "What evil dost thou do?" Then Brother Giles turned to another brother and said unto him: "Tell me, my brother, who, thinkest thou, is the readier, our Lord God to grant us

Labour humbly in prayer

Good works the ornament of the soul

His grace, or we to receive it?" And that brother replied: "Of a surety God is more ready to give us His grace than we to receive." Then quoth Brother Giles: "Do we then do what is good?" And that brother said: "Nay, we do evil." Then Brother Giles turned him unto the first brother, and said: "Behold, brother, how clearly is it shown, that we do evil; and how true is the answer that I gave, to wit, that I do evil." Quoth Brother Giles: "Many works are praised and lauded in the Holy Scripture, to wit, the works of mercy and other holy works; but our Lord speaking of prayer, said thus: The heavenly Father seeketh men that will worship Him on earth in spirit and in truth." Again, Brother Giles said that "the true Religious are like wolves; for they seldom go abroad in the sight of men, save only in great necessity, but straightway they study how to return to their own secret place without lingering or continuing among men. Good works are the ornament of the soul." A certain brother, a companion and familiar friend of Brother Giles, said unto him: "Father, but wherefore dost thou not sometimes go to speak of the things of God, and teach and care for the salvation of the souls of Christian folk?" Whereat replied Brother Giles: "My brother, I would fain satisfy my neighbour with humility, and without loss to my soul, to wit, with prayer." And that brother said: "At least thou shouldest sometimes go to visit thy kinsfolk." And Brother Giles replied: "Knowest thou not what the Lord

saith in the Gospel: Every one that hath forsaken father and mother, brothers, sisters, lands, for My name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold?" Then he said: "A nobleman entered the Order, whose riches were worth well-nigh sixty thousand pounds: therefore great gifts await those that for the love of God leave large possessions, sith God giveth a hundredfold more. But we who are blind, when we see a man of virtue and grace in the sight of God, cannot comprehend his perfectness, by reason of our own imperfection and blindness. But if a man were truly spiritual, scarcely ever would he wish to hear or see any one, save only in great need: for the truly spiritual man desires to be united to God through contemplation." Quoth Brother Giles to a certain brother: "Father, gladly would I know what is contemplation." And that brother replied: "Father, I do not yet know." Then said Brother Giles: "Meseemeth that the grade of contemplation is a heavenly fire and a sweet devotion of the Holy Spirit, and a rapture and uplifting of the mind intoxicated in the contemplation of the unspeakable savour of the divine sweetness, and a happy, peaceful and sweet delight of soul, that is rapt and uplifted in great marvel at the glorious things of heaven above; and a burning sense within of that celestial glory unspeakable."

Contemplation a heavenly fire

XII. Of holy spiritual prudence

O thou servant of the heavenly king, that wouldest learn the mysteries and the profitable

The way of spiritual life

and virtuous prudence of holy spiritual teaching, open well the ears of the mind of thy soul, and receive with the desire of thy heart, and carefully keep in the chamber of thy memory, the precious treasure of these spiritual doctrines and admonitions and counsels, that I declare to thee: by the which thou shalt be enlightened and directed in thy way, to wit, the way of spiritual life, and shalt be defended from the evil and cunning assaults of thy bodily and ghostly enemies, and with humble boldness shalt go safely travelling through the stormy sea of this present life, until at last thou shalt come to the longed-for harbour of salvation. Therefore, my son, take good heed and hearken unto my words: If thou wouldest see well, put out thine eyes and be blind; if thou wouldest hear well, become deaf; and if thou wouldest speak well, become dumb; and if thou wouldest walk well, stand firm and walk with thy mind; if thou wouldest work well, cut off thy hands and work with thy heart; and if thou wouldest love well, then hate thyself; and if thou wouldest earn and be rich, then lose and be poor; and if thou wouldest be glad and at peace, afflict thyself and stand always in fear and trust not thyself; if thou wouldest be exalted and have great honour, humble thyself and put thyself to shame; if thou wouldest be held in high reverence, despise thyself, and do reverence to those that do thee despite and dishonour; if thou wouldest always enjoy the good, always endure evil; if thou wouldest be blessed, desire that all men should curse and speak ill of

thee; and if thou wouldest have true rest for evermore, labour and afflict thyself and desire all manner of temporal woe. O how great wisdom is it to know how to do and bring these things to pass! but sith these things be very high and lofty, God granteth them but unto few. But of a sooth whoso studieth well all the things aforesaid and bringeth them to effect, would have no need to go to Bologna or to Paris, for to learn any other theology; for though a man were to live a thousand years and had nothing to do with his hands and nothing to say with his tongue; yet would he have enough to do in striving in his heart within, working for the purifying and guidance and justifying of his mind and of his soul. A man should not wish to see or hear or say aught save what is profitable to his soul. A man that knoweth not himself, is not known. Wherefore woe unto us, when we receive gifts and graces from the Lord and know them not: but woe, woe to them that receive them not nor know them, nor yet strive to win and gain them. Man is made in the image of God, and as he wills, so doth he change; but the good God changeth never.

Man made in the image of God

XIII. Of profitable and unprofitable knowledge

A man that would know much, must strive much and humble himself much, abasing himself and bowing down his head till he touch the ground; then will God give him much knowledge and wisdom. The highest wisdom is always to do good, working the thing which is

The highest wisdom is always to do good

virtuous, and guarding oneself well from every sin and from every occasion of sinning, and always to think on the judgments of God. On a time quoth Brother Giles to one that would go to the schools for to gain knowledge: "My brother, wherefore dost thou wish to go to the schools? for I would have thee know that the sum of all knowledge is to fear and love, and these two things are sufficient for thee: for so much wisdom is needful for a man, so long as he is working; and no more. Vex not thyself much to study for the profit of others, but always study to do the things that be profitable to thyself; for oftentimes doth it befall that we wish to gain much knowledge for to help others and little for to help ourselves: and I say unto thee that the word of God is not for him that speaks, nor yet for him that hears, but for him that worketh in truth. Some men who cannot swim go into the water to help drowning men: and it befalleth that they are all drowned together. If thou dost not take thought for the salvation of thine own soul, how wilt thou take thought for that of thy neighbours'? and if thou dost not do thine own work well, how wilt thou do the work of another well? for it cannot be believed that thou lovest the soul of another more than thine own. The preacher of the word of God should be a banner and a candle and a mirror to the people. Blessed is the man who in this wise guideth others on the way of salvation, and ceaseth not himself to go on the right path! Blessed is the man who in this wise calleth upon others to run, and ceaseth not

to run himself! More blessed is he who in this wise helpeth others to make gain and become rich and ceaseth not to enrich himself. I ween that the good preacher admonisheth and preacheth to himself more than he doth to others. Me-seemeth that the man that would convert and lead the soul of sinners to the path of God, should always be fearful lest he be vilely led astray by them, and drawn into the path of sin and of the devil and of hell.

Good speaking and evil speaking

XIV. Of good and evil speaking

The man that speaketh good words and profitable to souls is of very sooth as it were the mouth of the Holy Spirit; and likewise the man that speaketh evil words and unprofitable, is without doubt the mouth of the devil. When at any time good, spiritually-minded men be gathered together to have speech of one another, they should always speak of the beauty of holiness, to the end that holiness might please them more and they take the more delight therein; for taking pleasure and delight in virtue, they would the more strive therein, and striving therein would come to the greater love thereof; and through this love and their continual striving and delight in virtue, they would always rise up unto a more fervent love of God and a higher state of soul; for the which cause would the Lord grant them more graces and more gifts divine. The more a man is tempted, the more doth he need to speak of the holy virtues: for like as oft-times through evil talk of sins, men

A virtue to know when to keep silence

lightly fall into sinful deeds; so oft-times through discourse of virtue, are men lightly led and inclined to the holy deeds of virtue. But what shall we say of the good that cometh forth from virtue? for it is so great and high, that we cannot speak worthily of its high excellence, so marvellous and so infinite. And likewise, what shall we say of the evil and of the eternal pain that cometh forth from sin? For it is so great an evil and so deep an abyss, that it passeth all thought and comprehension and all possibility of speech. I deem it no less a virtue to know how well to keep silence than to know how well to speak: and therefore methinketh that a man ought to have a long neck like a crane, so that when a man wished to speak, his words would pass through many joints before they reached his mouth; that is to say, when a man wished to speak, he would need to think and think again and examine and discern right well both the how and the why and the time and the manner and condition of his hearers, and the effect on himself, and the intention that prompted him.

XV. Of good perseverance

What profit is it to a man to fast much and to pray and give alms and afflict himself with his thoughts fixed on heavenly things, if he attain not to the blessed haven of salvation he longeth for, to wit, the haven of good and firm perseverance? Sometimes doth it befall that on the sea appeareth a ship very beautiful and great

and strong and new, and full of much riches; and it happeneth that by reason of a storm or through the fault of the helmsman, that ship doth perish and sink, and is miserably drowned and cometh not to the longed-for haven. Then of what profit is all its beauty and excellence and riches, sith it perisheth so miserably in the waters of the sea? And likewise sometimes doth there appear upon the sea a little ship and old and with scanty merchandise; and having a good helmsman and discreet, it escapes from dangers, and comes safe out of the deep waters of the sea and reaches the longed-for haven; and so doth it happen to men in the stormy sea of this world. Wherefore quoth Brother Giles: "A man should at all times fear; and albeit he be in great prosperity or in great honour or in great perfectness, yet if he have not a good helmsman, to wit, discreet government of himself, he may perchance miserably perish in the deep sea of sin: and therefore for well-doing there is need most of all of perseverance, as saith the Apostle: Not he that beginneth, but he that perseveres unto the end, shall have the crown. When a tree springs up, it does not become great all at once; and after that it has become great, it does not therefore at once yield fruit; and when it does bear fruit, it will not all come to the mouth of the lord of that tree; for much of the fruit will fall to the ground and rot and be spoiled and be eaten by the beasts of the field; but if it endureth until its due season, the greater part of the fruit will be gathered by the lord of that

The need of perseverance for well-doing

The two greatest gifts of God

tree." Again quoth Brother Giles: "What would it profit me, if I were to taste of the kingdom of Heaven for a hundred years and did not continue therein, so that at the last I came not to a good end?" And also he said: "I deem that these are the two greatest graces and gifts of God that a man can attain to in this life, to wit, to persevere with love in the service of God, and to always guard himself from falling into sin."

XVI. Of the true religious life

Quoth Brother Giles, speaking of himself: "I would rather have a little of the grace of God as a Religious in the Order, than have many of the graces of God while living in the world: for in the world there be many more dangers and hindrances, and much less healing remedy and help than in the religious life." Likewise said Brother Giles: "Meseemeth that the sinner is more afraid of his own good than of his loss and hurt: for he is afraid to enter into the religious life to do penance, but is not afraid to offend God and harm his soul by staying in the hard and stiff-necked world and in the noisome mire of his sins, awaiting his eternal damnation at the last." A man of the world asked Brother Giles, saying: "Father, what dost thou counsel me to do? to enter into the religious life, or to stay in the world doing good works?" Whereunto Brother Giles made answer: "My brother, certain is it that if some needy wretch came to know that a great treasure

lay hid in a piece of common land, he would not take counsel of any man, for to learn whether it would be well for him to dig it up and hide it in his house; how much more ought a man to make speed and haste with all care and zeal to dig up the heavenly treasure that is found in the holy orders and spiritual communities, without seeking such counsel!" And that man of the world, hearing this answer, straightway gave all that he had to the poor, and stripped of every thing at once entered into the Order. Quoth Brother Giles: "Many men enter into the religious life, and do not put into effect and operation the things that appertain to the perfect state of holy religion; but such men are like unto the cow-herd that arrayed himself in the arms of Roland and knew not either how to fight or tilt therewith. Not every man knoweth how to ride a restive and a vicious horse; and if nathless he mount him thereon, he could not perchance keep himself from falling, when the horse begins to run and rear." Again quoth Brother Giles: "I deem it no great matter that a man should know how to find entrance to the court of the king; nor do I deem it a great matter for him to know how to gain some favours or kindnesses from the king; but the great thing is that he know how to stand well and to live in the king's court, guiding his ways with discretion as is meet. The court of the great King of heaven is the holy religious life, wherein it is not hard to enter and gain some gifts and graces from God; but the great thing is that a man know

The court of the King of heaven

The Friars Minor the most blessed men

how well to live and to continue therein with discretion until his death." Quoth Brother Giles: "I would rather live in the world always hoping and devoutly desiring to enter the religious life, than wear the habit in the Order, without any practice of virtuous deeds, continuing in sloth and idleness. Therefore ought the religious man always to strive to live a good and virtuous life, knowing that he cannot live in any other state than the one he hath professed." Once on a time Brother Giles said: "Meseemeth that the Order of the Friars Minor has in very sooth been sent by God for the profit and the abundant edifying of the people; but woe unto us brothers if we be not such men as we ought to be! Of a surety there could not be found in this life any men more blessed than we: for he is holy that followeth the holy one, and he is truly good that goeth on the path of good, and he is rich that walketh in the footsteps of the rich; and the Order of the Friars Minor, more than any other Order, followeth the footsteps of the best and the richest and the holiest there has ever been or ever will be, to wit, our Lord Jesu Christ.

XVII. Of holy obedience

The more a Religious is brought under the yoke of holy obedience through the love of God, the more fruit will he give of himself to God; the more he is subject to his superior for the honour of God, the more free and pure will he

be from sin. The truly obedient Religious is like unto the well-armed and well-horsed knight, that without fear breaks safely through the ranks of his enemies, because none of them can hurt him. But he that obeys with murmuring and perforce, is like unto the unarmed and ill-horsed knight; who entering into the battle, will be hurled to the ground by his enemies, and smitten by them and taken prisoner, and sometimes cast into prison and slain. The Religious who wishes to live according to the choice of his own will, shows that he wishes to build an everlasting habitation in the depths of hell. When the ox putteth his neck under the yoke, then he tilleth the ground well, so that it brings forth good fruit in its season, but when the ox wanders at will, the ground remains untilled and wild, and giveth not its fruit in due season. And so the Religious that boweth his head beneath the yoke of obedience, giveth much fruit to the Lord God in due season: but he that is not obedient to his Superior with a good heart, remaineth barren and wild and without fruit of his vows. Wise and high-souled men bow their heads right willingly under the yoke of holy obedience without fear or doubting, but foolish and cowardly men strive to draw their heads away from under the yoke of holy obedience and are not willing to be subject unto any creature. I deem it higher perfectness in the servant of God, merely to obey his Superior through reverence and love for God, than to obey God directly, should God lay His commands upon him; for whoso is

The yoke of holy obedience

Obedience the road to all virtue

obedient unto a vicar of the Lord, would of a surety be still more obedient to the Lord Himself, if he were bidden of Him. Also meseemeth that if a man had promised obedience unto another, and had the grace to speak with Angels, and it should hap that as he was speaking with the Angels, he were called by him to whom he had promised obedience; I say that he ought straightway to leave his speech with the Angels and should run to do obedience, for the honour of God. He that hath set his neck beneath the yoke of holy obedience and then wishes to withdraw his neck from under that obedience, through desire to follow a life of greater perfectness, I say that if he be not first truly perfect in the state of obedience, then it is a sign of great pride, which lurketh secretly within his soul. Obedience is the road that leadeth unto all good and to all virtue; and disobedience is the road to all evil and sin.

XVIII. Of the remembrance of death

If a man had always before the eyes of his mind the remembrance of death, and of the last judgment, and of the pains and torments of the damned, sure is it that nevermore would desire of sin or of offending against God assail him. But if it were possible for a man to have lived from the beginning of the world even until now, and in all that time have suffered all manner of adversity, tribulation, pains, afflictions and griefs: and to have died, and for his soul to have come

to receive eternal joy in heaven; then what harm would all the evil he had endured in the past time be unto him? And so likewise: if a man had had, through all the time aforesaid, every good thing, all the delights, pleasures and consolations in the world, and then, at his death, his soul were to receive the eternal pains of hell; what joy would he have of all the good he had received in the time past? Quoth a beggar unto Brother Giles: "I tell thee that right gladly would I live long in this world, and have great riches and abundance of all things, and be much honoured of men." Whereunto Brother Giles said: "My brother, if thou wert lord of all the world, and could live therein a thousand years in all temporal joys, delights, pleasures, and consolations, pray tell me what reward and what merit thou wouldest hope to gain from this miserable flesh, the which thou fain wouldest serve and please? But I tell thee that the man who leadeth a good life after the mind of God, and guardeth himself from offending God, will surely receive of God the highest blessings, and an infinite reward for ever, and great abundance and great riches and great honour and long life eternally in the everlasting glory of heaven: unto which may the good God bring us, our Lord and King Jesu Christ: to the glory of the same Jesu Christ and of His poor little one, Francis."

The reward of a good life

This translation of the "Fioretti di San Francesco" *has been specially prepared for this series by* Mr T. W. Arnold, M.A., *formerly Scholar of Magdalene College, Cambridge; Professor of Philosophy in the Government College, Lahore; late Professor of Philosophy, Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College, Aligarh, India.*

I. G.

Easter, 1898.

NOTE

With a self-suppression befitting a child of Saint Francis, the author of this most exquisite expression of the religious life of the Middle Ages has elected to remain anonymous. Still, though the writer has kept his name hidden from us, a few autobiographical details seem now and then to bring us into personal contact with him. He tells us that he was a contemporary of Brother Jacques of La Massa (chap. xli., xlviii.), that he was an eye-witness of the ecstasy of Brother John of Alvernia (chap. xlviii., liii.), and that he derived some of his information from Brother Ugolino (chap. xlv.). Now, of these, Brother Jacques died before 1280, Brother John of Alvernia died in 1322, and Brother Ugolino some years later.*

The date of the author or compiler (whichever he may have been) has therefore to be fixed somewhere between this time and 1390, in which year the earliest dated MS. of the "Fioretti" was written. Part of the book, however, viz., the first thirty-eight chapters, which treat of Saint Francis himself and his companions, is very possibly of an earlier period than the rest, and grew out of a desire to put on record such incidents in the life of the Saint as had not found a place in the biographies which had been published up to that time. The second part would thus comprise chapters xxxix. to liii.; of these chapters, xlii. to the end† speak only of the brothers of the March of Ancona, and are evidently intended to

* Il Libro de' Fioretti di San Francesco. Studio del P. Bonaventura da Sorrento, p. 436. (Omaggio del Mondo Cattolico a San Francesco di Assisi nella Ricorrenza del vii. Centenario dalla Nascita. Parte v. Naples, 1885.)

† The various appendices, viz., the Reflections on the Stigmata, and the lives of Brother Juniper and Brother Giles, are probably by another hand, and of a later date.

serve as a monument to the glory of the Brothers Minor of this Province. The author, therefore, whoever he may have been, would certainly seem to have belonged to some monastery in this centre of his predilection. "The Province of the March of Ancona," he says, "was in olden time adorned, even as the sky with stars, with brothers that were patterns of holy life; the which, like shining lights of heaven, have illumined and adorned the Order of Saint Francis and the world, with ensamples and with doctrine" (chap. xlii.).

These indications are much too slight to enable us to determine with any degree of certainty who the author of the "Fioretti" really was. But the laborious investigations of commentators have identified him with a certain Ugolino Brunforte, who was born in 1262 and died in 1348.* He came of a noble family that had migrated from France to Italy in the days of Charlemagne; his father was Seigneur of Sarnano (between Gualdo and Amandola); he joined the order of the Brothers Minor about the age of sixteen in the Convent of Roccabruna; and on account of his virtue and his learning he was elected Bishop of Teramo by the common consent of the clergy and the people, but his election was not confirmed by the Pope, who had already chosen another occupant of the See. He was elected Provincial of Macerata in 1344, and held this office until his death four years later.† It is of interest to note that he was the nephew of two of the Brothers Minor mentioned in the Fioretti, namely, Jacques da Fallerone (chap. li.) and Pellegrino da Fallerone, who was converted while a student at Bologna and "wished not to live as a priest, but as a lay brother, albeit he was a great scholar and right learned in the canon law" (chap. xxvii.).

It is a matter of some dispute whether the "Fioretti" was originally written in Italian or was translated

* P. Bonaventura da Sorrento, p. 437. L. Manzoni: Studi sui Fioretti di S. Francesco (Miscellanea Francescana. Vol. III. p. 152. Foligno, 1889).

† P. Bonaventura da Sorrento, pp. 436–8.

from a Latin original. The whole collection forms the nucleus of three distinct Latin legends of Saint Francis, of which one only—Speculum vitae S. Francisci et sociorum eius—has been published.* Manzoni, one of the most zealous enquirers into the authorship of the "Fioretti," believes the Latin version to represent the original form of the work, and while strongly upholding the claims of Ugolino Brunforte to be the author of the original work, considers that we must look elsewhere for the translator. This translator he believes to have been a certain John da San Lorenzo, who was born of a noble family of Florence, and was Bishop of Bisignano in Calabria from 1354 to 1357. He was the author of a history of the Franciscan Order, and of a life of St Onofrio, and of some other works in the vulgar tongue. He further identifies this John da San Lorenzo with the writer of a MS. of the "Fioretti" that is to be found in the Library of the University of Bologna, in which the following words occur just after the Reflections on the Stigmata:

> O confessor Franceseo benedetto
> risguarda el to servo Zohanne
> che ha scripti questi toi Fioretti.

These words would seem most naturally to be the prayer of the copyist, such as is commonly found at the end of mediæval MSS. But Sbaraglia also supposed them to have been written by this same John da San Lorenzo, whom, however, he regarded as the original author of the "Fioretti."† But it is hardly possible that a man who was sent by the Pope as ambassador to the Khan of Tartary in 1338, and was young and vigorous enough to stand the fatigues of so toilsome a journey, could have received his information from Jacques de la Massa, who died before 1280.‡ Slight as the grounds

* They are described at length by Manzoni (Miscellanea Francescana. Vol. III. pp. 162-7).

† Supplementum et castigatio ad scriptores trium ordinum S. Francisci a Waddingo, aliisve descriptos. Opus posthumum Fr. Jo. H. Sbaraleal, p. 436 (Rome, 1806).

‡ P. Bonaventura da Sorrento, p. 436.

of identification are, it would yet seem more probable that the Italian version came from the pen of this Florentine rather than from that of a native of the March of Ancona, such as was Ugolino Brunforte, for the "Fioretti" is written in the best Tuscan, and its purity of diction and refinement of style cause it to be reckoned among the finest specimens of this, the literary dialect of Italy.

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